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A PECULIAR PREMIER

By Charles Vale

I

“ **G**LAD to see you, my Lord. Hardly expected you. Thought you would be detained in the House; long statement, public business, foreign affairs—so the papers say, eh?”

The speaker, a man of medium height, with a figure at present not unpleasing, but showing a tendency toward grossness, looked inquiringly at his guest.

“ My dear Landor,” said his Lordship, “ the great aim, *le grand œuvre*, of modern—as of ancient—worn-out men is the search for the unattainable. Here I seek and find rest.”

He leaned back in his chair and clasped his hands above his head. “ It is so peaceful,” he murmured, “ and quietness is such a change—such a relief!”

“ From which I gather that your Lordship has been sailing in troubled waters, eh?”

“ My public life has been one long and stormy voyage,” said Lord Innisbrook. “ A tragical life, Mr. Landor; a life worthy of delineation in melodrama at the Adelphi. I warn all aspiring young men against the fancied charms, the idle, empty fascination of a political career. The fascination is a delusion and a snare. The charms are non-existent. This is one of my few really serious utterances. Let the world take warning.”

“ Your Lordship is facetious.”

“ Nay, I am serious; believe me, really serious.”

“ Let me hope, then, that your advice applies only to young men. You will remember that the Council of the

Conservative Association for West Harwood has been pleased to nominate me as its candidate at the next election.”

“ Of course. A man of mature experience finds his proper sphere in the House of Commons. I desired to warn only the young, the men of genius, who intend to reform the universe. The process of disillusion is so painful.”

“ We who have passed through the mill have no illusions.”

“ Exactly. We have no illusions. We are only tired.”

“ If I may trouble you for a very few moments with public matters, what was the result of the debate on Lord Windermere’s position?”

“ The result?” said his Lordship, with a look of surprise. “ There was no result. They talked for four hours. That is all.”

“ My Lord, whatever view the House may take, Lord Windermere’s policy is a crime. It is a disgrace to England. Yes, I say it with regret; as a stanch Conservative and supporter of the Government, I say it with great regret. But it is true. His action is utterly wrongful. If England permits it, she palliates a crime and covers herself with fatal shame.”

“ Very likely,” said Lord Innisbrook, placidly. “ But there are so many wrongs that cry aloud for instant redress, so many disgraces that, if endured, will drag England from her high position among nations. Yet we endure them; in time we forget them, and they disappear.”

“ I wrote to Lord Windermere the other day through my solicitor, offer-

ing to negotiate for the purchase of the collieries. I intimated that I was willing to pay practically whatever price he wished to demand. Had he consented, the men would have been reinstated and the dispute ended. My Lord, he sent me a reply that I might almost term insulting—in fact, most insulting."

"Really?" said his Lordship. "How peculiar! How *very* peculiar! Ah, Lady Landor, how *are* you? I have come, as usual, you see, to find a little repose."

"You are always welcome. No, pray, do not get up. Joseph, will you fetch me that chair? Ah, thank you, my Lord."

"I have been saying how delightful it is, Lady Landor, to have such a place as this to which I may come; a place where one forgets the turmoil of the stupid world, where one escapes from bores and boredom. It is a Haven of Rest; veritably, a Haven of Rest."

Her glance, half-sad, half-defiant, seemed to say: "How much of your speech is sincere? How much is satire? Is it all satire? Oh, cruel!" The inquiry plainly ended in reproach.

"We are your debtors, Mr. Landor," said his Lordship, avoiding her eyes, "for this Haven. It is not the least of your many gifts to suffering humanity."

"Wealth, my Lord, has its responsibilities. I have endeavored to fulfil them."

"Exactly. You fulfil them admirably."

"I have said that wealth brings responsibilities. It brings anxieties also, my Lord, grave anxieties. I have to endure them."

"Exactly," said his Lordship; "you endure them, as you fulfil the responsibilities—the one, perhaps, resulting from the other—admirably, most admirably."

The philanthropist bowed.

"Is that Mr. Lucas?" said her Ladyship, looking toward the house. "My dear Joseph, another of your worries—"

Landor advanced to greet the newcomer.

"At last!" said Lord Innisbrook, looking at her with a strange smile.

"At last!" she repeated. "And what is the good of it?"

II

"It is good to be with you. That is all. Just to be with you. You will grant me no more."

"How could you be so cruel?" bitterly.

"Cruel? I was not cruel. I am never cruel. I am tired, as I have said; and it is delightful to be here, with the trees, the grass, the ministry of the country. I am utterly tired, but you will not believe me."

"I believe that you waste your energies; that you are throwing yourself and your powers away in playing with the semblance of great ideas, when you might be doing great deeds. Oh, Julian, if you would only *begin!*"

"If I would only begin! I began years ago. I thought wonderful thoughts, and dreamed marvelous dreams. The world was rotten; I meant to make it fit to live in. And what is the result? Nothing. The world is rotten still, rotten to the core. I dream no more dreams."

He stared sombrely at the blue sky, and gradually a change came over his face.

"I used to believe," he said slowly, "in—you know—God, and all that sort of thing. I used to have quite a striking belief. Where is it? Gone—gone because there seemed no justification for it. Now I have nothing. Sometimes I seem to clasp a dim idea of a vast something, utterly passionless, working through ages and by changeless laws; never interfering with details, caring only for the final result. The world may cry perpetually in agony; it is part of the great scheme. All may come right—some day; but there is no relaxation of the one plan. All human effort is powerless, absolutely useless; the scheme will work itself out. Let us play the fool;

we can do nothing else. Eat, drink—and die; it really doesn't matter. Is not this a great idea?—an idea to spur one on? It is the only possible adaptation of theism to actual circumstances. You see, I am a pessimist."

"God help you."

"*You might.*"

A delicate color stole into her lovely face. "My Lord, there is one subject that you have promised to avoid."

"I beg your pardon. . . . It is very good of you," he said, after a pause, "to listen to me, as you do, day after day. Who would imagine that the man whom his colleagues call the 'imperturbable Innisbrook' is identical with the gloomy pessimist who afflicts you so constantly? I am ashamed."

"When you speak to me from your heart, you speak as you do to few. It is a compliment. Do you think I am bored?"

"Forgive me. I was irritated. Yes, I speak to you freely. I never confide in others, and you are, consequently, troubled unduly. But it will not be long before you are free."

"In what way, Julian? You look so strange—you alarm me."

"I am tired of pretending to do much, and doing nothing. I am going to seek shelter in some sequestered nook, and meditate."

"What is this! You cannot mean—?"

"Exactly," said the Earl. "I intend to resign, and retire into private life."

"It is impossible—absurd."

He smiled.

"The Queen will not permit it, I am sure," she went on. "You cannot refuse her."

"Her Majesty is a very estimable lady. I have a great respect for her exalted position."

"Well?"

"I had the honor of an interview yesterday, as you have perhaps read. I explained my intentions. Her Majesty was graciously pleased to raise objections. I explained my intentions again."

"It is wrong, my Lord. You have no right to do it."

"I am tired of 'make-believe.' I consider the reason sufficient."

"Will nothing teach you?" despairingly.

"I have learned more than I can hope ever to forget," he said, sadly.

"And nothing will move you?"

"Nothing, and no one; for *you* will not. . . . Ah, Landor, here you are at last. How do, Lucas? Still slaving away, as usual, of course. How does the work get on?"

"Slowly, my Lord; almost imperceptibly. It is so hard to make a visible impression upon a mass of such vastness. We must go on, with faith."

"With faith!" murmured the Earl.

"We must trust in Providence, and pray that we may not be disheartened."

"Pray! What is 'to pray?'" said Innisbrook to himself. He looked curiously at this gaunt, careworn priest, who seemed to believe in the reality of faith, in the efficacy of prayer. "A great man," he murmured. "Also, an enviable man."

"I see from the papers that your Lordship made a most important and satisfactory statement to-day. I congratulate your Lordship upon the acclamation it received," said Landor.

"Thanks. I shall make another statement to-morrow."

"Equally satisfactory?"

"Eminently satisfactory."

"When I look round," said Lucas to Lady Landor, "and see the flowers and the greenness, and breathe the pure air, I seem to be in a dream. In the East End one almost forgets that there are such things as freshness and purity."

"Yes," said Innisbrook. "Does it not make you long for a quiet cottage in the country, with a garden in which you pretend to work during the morning, and in which, on hot afternoons, you can sit quietly, reading your copy of Mrs. Hemans's poems, or your Fabian Society tracts?"

"We have work to do," said Lucas, simply. "Why should we think of rest?"

"Ah," said the Earl.

"Learn a lesson from him," Lady Landor whispered.

"These men are dominated by one idea, which drives out or subdues all others. They never revolt. They have no passions. I have. At least one great passion, Lady Landor," in a low voice.

"I see poor Wills is dead," said Mr. Landor. "Had a curious career, eh? Passionate man, by all accounts."

"Yes," said the Earl. "Most distinctly a passionate man. And he is dead? Passion is *very* deplorable."

"Have you any fresh news from Sirocco?" inquired Lucas.

"The usual bulletin. Nothing new. You see there another instance of the evil results of unrestrained passion," he added, sorrowfully. "The Mussulmans massacre the Christians, and the Christians massacre the Mussulmans. It is *very* deplorable. I wish they would all massacre one another, and make an end of their incessant disturbances. There is too much passion."

"You are incorrigible," murmured Lady Landor.

"Only hopeless," he answered, in the same way. "What is the good of indignation, of vigor, of superlative adjectives? What is the good of anything? God! I cannot discover."

"The island is richly endowed, I believe?" said Lucas. "A fertile soil, a charming climate, all the gifts of nature in profusion?"

"Sirocco is a modern Elysium," said the Earl.

"The pity of it!" said Lucas; "the pity of it!"

"Well, I must go," said the Earl, plaintively. "I dine with Her Majesty. It is a great nuisance."

When he said good-bye to Lady Landor he clasped the little hand she gave him tightly in his own. "It is just possible that I may not see you again for a long time. Ah, why must you be so rigidly loyal—to him?"

"Could I be otherwise?"

"No; *you* could not," he said, reverently. "Good-bye, . . . dearest."

III

"JULIAN, you are stupid, and you are foolish," said Lady Melville.

"Exactly," said Innisbrook. "Stupidity, my dear, is an Englishman's inalienable birthright. Moreover, our age is the age of folly, and we who are cosmopolitan must necessarily be affected by the prevailing influence. Half of the human race lives frivolously, to escape from serious thought, for reflection would at once show the utter ridiculousness of living at all. The other half perseveres with painful earnestness, buoyed up by the hope of a fools' paradise. These illusions are deplorable."

"You were always odd," said his sister, with a sigh.

" . . . A man of strong individuality, strikingly manifested," murmured Innisbrook, quoting from a print.

"I know that nothing will induce you to change your plans. Well, I must bow to the inevitable. I have scolded you dutifully; in recompense, satisfy my curiosity. What are you going to do?"

"Exactly. That is the question, most emphatically. But I must reprove you, my dear. The exhibition of curiosity, as of all sensations, is *very* deplorable."

At this moment two men entered the room.

"Now shall these weighty issues be resolved!" cried the Earl. "Melville, advise me. O trusty and well-beloved cousin Gale, what *am* I going to do?"

Of the newcomers one may be dismissed without comment. The other would have claimed and received attention under any conditions. Tall, the sense of height subdued and modified the stoutness that denoted the *bon vivant*. The face, though faulty in detail, revealed unmistakably immense intellectual powers. The curve of the nostrils showed extreme sensibility. The lips were unusually broad and full.

"I cannot tell you what you are going to do, Innisbrook," Gale said,

laughing. "But I can tell you what you have done—you have electrified the great and admirable British public."

"Really?"

"The papers are very droll. I read the *Times*, and I was forced to confess—forgive me, there was no alternative—that you were a combination of demigod, hero and wingless cherub. I read the *Daily Infallible*, and I could not avoid identifying you, if not with Lucifer, with, at any rate, his exceedingly effective understudy. Yes, they are decidedly amusing."

"I never read newspapers," said the Earl. "They are all so illogical, so passionately one-sided."

"If you really haven't made up your mind, and want a hint," said Sir Francis, "why not go out for a big shoot? South Africa isn't half-bad." There was a trace of wistfulness in his voice.

"Ye-es," said the Earl, doubtfully. "It might do me good; but I fancy I should not care for it. I require something less exciting. I feel as if I should like to go into the country—into some perfectly calm, sheltered spot, with milkmaids and cows and so on—and reform myself quietly."

"Reform is simply a synonym for evasion," said Gale. "If you went with the idea of starting reforms, the influence of diplomatic tradition would impel you to deceive yourself."

"Diplomacy is very demoralizing, I admit."

"Yes," said Gale. "It has its advantages."

"To live in a village would be charming," said Lady Melville. "You might pose gracefully as the 'Mysterious Recluse,' wander mournfully through the lanes at night, and cull the delights of solitude. Ultimately, you might marry the rector's daughter, and enjoy perpetual oblivion."

"The picture is attractive," said the Earl, meditatively.

"By the way," said Gale, "really, I have almost forgotten to tell you my news. They say that Kitty Blanchard eloped two days ago with Verne."

"Poor child! She is only a child."

"Verne? What Verne?"

"Verne of Verne's Court. Decent fellow, I believe."

"The subject of elopements is *very* interesting," said Innisbrook. "I have never been able to effect a decision about them. I suppose the husband suffers; and the good taste is decidedly questionable. But there are many considerations to be taken into account."

"Verne?" said Sir Francis. "Wasn't he mixed up in the Randall case some years ago? Egad! I'm sure he was."

"Yes," said Gale. "They told a curious tale about him. It was believed that he was really the man, and that Mrs. Randall waited for him at Charing Cross. However, she waited in vain. For some mysterious reason Verne did not appear. Wilton did; whether by accident or design, doubtful. What Wilton said, no one knows, of course; but she went with him."

"A strange tale."

"Peculiar man, this Verne, apparently," said Innisbrook. "Elopement on the brain, I should fancy."

"He has achieved success at last."

"A success that is worse than a defeat," said Sir Francis. "He will regret it exceedingly in a few months."

"Exactly," said Innisbrook. "To be victorious at such a cost is *very* deplorable. Many so-called victories are really overthrows; many apparent defeats are triumphs disguised. For instance, Benningham told me the other day that nothing but absolute ruin could set him on his legs again."

"I admire Benningham," said Gale. "He loses so gracefully."

"I suppose he will marry the American. Not a *very* painful remedy."

"They say he is married already to Alice Leyton. It may be so. Who knows?"

"We are fond of scandal," remarked Lady Melville.

"Each in his turn," Gale answered. "Ours may come—some day." His brow darkened. "I suppose we *are* uncharitable," he added. "Man is a strange animal."

"After all," said Innisbrook, "there

is no harm done. To a man wandering through Alpine valleys, or lost in the glory of the sunlit Campagna, does it matter what we say of him in this bleak and sombre land?"

"Perhaps not—if he can forget," said Gale.

"If he can forget?" the Earl repeated, slowly. "Ah, yes; exactly. What a curious idea," he murmured to himself. "What a *very* curious idea."

"Dear me," cried Lady Melville. "Here is Lady Landor!"

She glanced at her brother, but could detect no sign of emotion. Yet a close observer would have seen that his eyes had a strange brilliancy.

"Lady Landor," said Innisbrook, a moment later, "is it possible to forget?"

"To forget?" with surprise. "I hope so. But—to forget what?"

"You," he murmured. She trembled.

IV

LORD INNISBROOK glanced pleasantly at the mass of correspondence, neatly docketed and arranged on the table in order of importance.

"Mr. Raymond," he said to his private secretary, "you have—ah—a dictionary, I believe. Will you kindly look out the word 'pilgrimage'?"

"Pilgrimage—a voyage undertaken by a pilgrim; a journey to some place deemed sacred, for a devotional purpose; the journey of life.'" Thus the secretary.

"Ah, exactly," said the Earl. "Mr. Raymond, I intend to undertake a pilgrimage."

The secretary smiled.

"I start immediately. I shall return this evening, possibly at a late hour."

He left the room, pressing a bell as he did so. When he reached the steps his hansom was waiting.

"Waterloo," said his Lordship, as he jumped in.

He arranged the cushions and lit a cigar carefully.

"Life," he soliloquized, "can be re-

garded subjectively from two positions—the interior of a hansom, and the exterior—that is to say, *not* the interior—of a hansom. There is a sense of exhilaration peculiar to this method of traveling, a suggested impression of superiority which increases the powers of observation appreciably. Every philosopher should pass his days in a hansom."

He leaned back and contemplated the kaleidoscope of humanity, streets and horses.

"This London is very wonderful," he murmured.

He pulled the cord. "Faster!"

Men turned round as he passed. Policemen gazed curiously.

"Gad!" he said. "We crawl. It is unendurable." He pulled the cord again. "Go like the devil!

"One does not set out on a pilgrimage every day," he muttered.

At Waterloo he intercepted a porter. "Find me a compartment."

"Yessir. What train, sir?"

"Any train," said his Lordship, placidly. "I—ah—am undertaking a pilgrimage."

"Yessir," said the man, instantly. "This w'y, please. 'Ere you are, sir." He installed him in a smoking compartment.

"Queer cove," said the porter, as he left him. "But, by Gawd! he's give me a sov."

"Really, a most intelligent man," his Lordship murmured. "A remarkably intelligent man."

The train started, and Innisbrook uttered a sigh of satisfaction. They passed stations, stopping at some, rushing through others. After half an hour: "I wonder where I am going?" he said, meditatively.

After an hour they came to a junction.

"I wonder where *the deuce* I am going," said Innisbrook.

"Change for Newington!" cried the porters.

An inspector put his head through the window. "Where for, sir?"

"Precisely what I was wondering," said Innisbrook.

"Eh?" said the official.

"Do you happen to know," said the Earl, confidentially, "of any quiet little place suitable—ah—for a pilgrimage?"

"Where's your ticket, sir?"

"I have none."

"Ah!" said the inspector, "I see. Pilgrimage, you said, sir. Um—um—well, Derbiton's a nice little place. Fifteen miles further on, sir."

"Rural?" asked his Lordship. "Cows and—and trees and that sort of thing?"

"Beautiful!" said the inspector.

"Really," Innisbrook murmured, as he placed a sovereign in the man's hand, "these railway men are all wonderfully intelligent. I suppose the incessant contact with many people knocks off all rough edges of stupidity."

"I am going, then, to Derbiton," he added.

"Derbiton! Derbiton!" cried the porter, as the train drew up at a small station.

"Here I get out," quoth Innisbrook.

"I have no ticket," he said to the collecting clerk. "You see, I am undertaking a pilgrimage. What have I to pay you?"

"Fourteen and three. Thanks. Keep the—? Thank you, sir."

Innisbrook passed through the gate and entered the lane.

V

AFTER advancing a few yards he stood still, listening intently and peering into the golden blueness with tremulous anxiety.

"It is," he said, with relief, "yes, actually, it is a lark." He resumed his course. "Positively, a real lark," he murmured.

In a field on his right some cattle were grazing.

"Cows!" he cried, rapturously. "My God, cows!"

He looked at the hedges, which were in full leaf, glowing with an exquisite greenness; at the interdotted violets; at the daisies that glistened in the fields; at the hills in the background, covered with heather, which

shot its gold and purple through the sunlight.

"This is truly rural," he said. "Could there be in all England a more desirable place for a pilgrimage?"

At a distance of about half a mile from the station a small by-path branched off from the main road, and Innisbrook unconsciously turned to the left and followed it, perceiving gradually the beauty of the girdle of elm trees and the overhanging arch of branches, through which the rays of the sun pierced with a chastened softness and the sounds of the country penetrated only with a hushed sweetness. The strange sense of peacefulness could not fail to affect him, and he yielded to the spell of the moment, releasing himself from the clasp of affection, and shaking off, temporarily, the influence of long-enduring, bitter thoughts and pessimistic reasonings.

He came to a stile at the side of a locked gate.

"This is an admirable place at which to rest," he said to himself; and climbing to the top of the gate sat there with his long legs dangling downward, feeling extremely like an overgrown schoolboy.

"The country is very wonderful when the sun is shining," he murmured. "How strangely, almost infinitely wonderful it must have seemed to the men of the old days, when the eyes of faith could see in every rivulet a laughing, golden-haired nymph, an incarnation of something divine, which might rise at any moment to move the heart with strange thrillings, to teach the inner mysteries of a fuller and more passionate love. And to the women, what visions would come as they wandered through the romance of woodland!—dreams to form a recompense, perhaps, for the dreariness of actual life. . . . Beneath those trees, to which Fate led their straying footsteps, Apollo's self might slumber; to be wakened, as they passed with half-feigned trembling—to be wakened, and bring the deeper flush of the

love-light to olive cheeks; . . . or some gaunt, sinewy god might lurk in hiding—'twere not unpleasant to be roughly entreated by the fierce desire of divinity. . . . I will wager that the passionate little rogues often wandered far and wide—shuddering, of course, as they looked round warily, to see if some Olympic majesty tracked them as they went. Ah, well! You are gone, you old-world myths and fancies, and the new day has its fresh imaginations, perhaps as baseless as the old.

"I have been afraid of the country. I wonder why? It does not seem so very terrible."

He was startled by hearing a slight noise, and turning round hastily, saw a small vision in red descending from the last step of the old-fashioned stile. She had managed to almost climb over without attracting his attention. But it is not difficult to elude the attention of dreamers.

"Is this the Oracle?" quoth the Earl.

"Little child," he said, "you are young, and should be ignorant of the meaning both of good and of evil, for, through want of knowledge, you cannot realize the distinction, and the words are meaningless. Tell me, then, little one, is it possible to forget?"

The child looked at him for a moment, and then went on. She did not understand his words, and therefore they could not be addressed to her. He took from his pocket a penny and held it out. "Catch!" he shouted. Of course she missed, and he descended from his perch to help her find it. He searched diligently, down on his knees, she gravely watching. He found it at last and placed it in her little hand, and she turned away, beginning, after a moment, to run as effectively as she could.

"To lose that penny would have been a great pity," Innisbrook reflected. "It was the reward of Ignorance—of Ignorance, which is yet wise enough to know the value of a penny."

He resumed his position on the gate.

After a while came the inevitable lovers, who negotiated the stile with much elaboration—and some annoyance, as the Earl regarded them attentively.

"Pardon me," he said, pleasantly, when all was finished. "But I have undertaken a pilgrimage. Tell me, I pray you, is it possible to forget?"

They looked at him and at each other. "No," they said, proudly, and resumed their way, arm in arm.

"This is disheartening," said the Earl, gloomily. "Ignorance cannot answer, and Love offers a denial. What will be the third form of the Oracle?"

That which appeared like an old man, wofully clothed, came slowly into view, approached the stile and surmounted it with difficulty.

"Friend," said the Earl, wistfully, "you have evidently wandered far; you have seen the world, and apparently have known pain and trouble. Tell me, is it possible to forget?"

"Sometimes," said the man, after the surprise had passed. "But sometimes you remember again."

"Thank you," said the Earl, as he held out a coin. "Can I assist you?"

"Damn it all!" cried the vagrant, with sudden energy. "Are you God, that you give away like this the gold that brings happiness?"

"Happiness? In what way?"

"Can you ask?" said the wanderer, and passed on.

"Curious world," murmured Innisbrook. "He has seen better days, I suppose, as we say. Is it worth while to call him back and help him?" He hesitated. "Fudge! what does it matter? *Cui bono?* . . . Fifty years hence—

"So weariness is doubtful, ambiguous," he added, thoughtfully. "Ignorance, Love, Pain—what is the fourth?"

A young man approached, looking pale and very tired. He was reading as he walked, and stooped reprehensibly. Absorbed in his book, he crossed the stile and was passing on

without noticing the figure on the gate.

"Friend," said the Earl, "you are evidently a seeker after knowledge. Tell me—I ask because I have undertaken a pilgrimage—is it possible to forget?"

"You would think so," replied the student, "if you had crammed for a year and the beastly stuff ran out of your head as soon as you got into the 'exam' room." He returned to his book with an impatient gesture.

"At last!" said the Earl. "At last! Ignorance, Love, Pain, Knowledge—and Knowledge is the only one that can forget!"

He remained for some time, but no more people passed. Finally he began slowly to retrace his steps to the station. Then he stopped, laughing. "Of course, I want something to eat—something to drink." He turned round. "The path must take me somewhere," he thought, and walked on vigorously, till it led into a highway, and the highway developed into a village street. And at the top of the village was the "Royal George." He went in.

"I should like a glass of beer," he said. "And—ah—can you oblige me with—with some bread and some cheese?"

An exceedingly pretty woman served him, and as he ate his bread and cheese and drank his beer he watched her movements. She came into the room several times, and at last he spoke to her. "My dear hostess," he said, courteously, "tell me—I ask because I have undertaken a pilgrimage—is it possible to forget?"

She burst into tears, and quickly left the room.

"*Sunt lachrymæ rerum,*" mused Innisbrook, as he quietly went out.

As he walked back to the station, the darkness was beginning to gather, and the stars leaped up at intervals with a tiny glitter.

"I know now why I dreaded the country," he said, thoughtfully. "It is the other half of the line—'*et mortalia mentem tangunt.*' One feels it rather acutely—in the country."

VI

"A few days ago, Lady Landor, I undertook a pilgrimage."

"A pilgrimage?" said Gale. "What new drollery have you been achieving?"

"I desired to offer my devotions at the shrine of St. Oblivion. Unfortunately, I was unable to discover it."

"Oblivion!" murmured Lady Landor. "So you still wish . . . to forget me?"

"It is not a question of willing, but of necessity. I dare not remember."

"And where, pray, did you seek the shrine of this much-to-be-propitiated saint?" Gale inquired.

"There is a charming village called Derbiton, to which Fate, or chance, was pleased to direct me. My venturesome quest was unsuccessful, but I have the consolation of knowing that it was the means of revealing to me a veritable sylvan paradise."

"The place is really pretty?" said Lady Landor.

"It is beautiful."

"A shrine," said Gale, "is frequently a tomb. Suppose you had discovered the tomb of Oblivion?"

"A tomb hides only the perishable; the spiritual remains, and cannot be imprisoned," said Lady Landor.

"The doctrine of a Resurrection is very quaint," remarked Gale, "if viewed from the standpoint of the popular idea. The conventional angel appalls me. Consider the terrible monotony of such an existence!"

"Talking of pilgrimages," said Lucas, "I sometimes think it is a pity that they have vanished from the religious system of our Church."

"Yes," Gale assented. "There is a certain degree of pathetic grandeur in the picture which appeals to the artistic temperament. The solitary penitent, the misguided fanatic, the long line of zealous devotees, all seeking relief from the stubborn reality which they know and can measure, in the undefined supernatural which they do not know, and which may, therefore, be all-powerful—the said

supernatural suggested and typified by a little tawdry tinsel. Well, we can understand them. And I think we still have our penitents, our fanatics, our earnest votaries, with their sense of personal weakness, their faith in the unknown, their trust in the virtues of tinsel."

"Tinsel may disfigure, but it cannot destroy," said Lucas. "God is not nullified because we assert His existence in party shibboleths and confuse eternal truths with the superstitions of mediæval density."

"I have often been in the country, of course," Innisbrook remarked; "house-parties and so on. But I suppose the people distract one's attention, and I have never before realized its influence fully: the exhilaration at the beginning, the concluding sense of desolation."

"A small village and a great city are both sadly depressing," said Gale. "The littleness of the one and the vastness of the other are painfully obtrusive; one feels so utterly alone. The village is perhaps the worse of the two, yet London is very trying to the nerves. If we desire to obliterate our self-consciousness, to forget—" he looked at Innisbrook—"we must go to some growing town, which conveys no suggestions. If we are suitably occupied, we may, perhaps, be moderately happy."

"Ah!" murmured the Earl.

"I believe you are right," said Lucas. "It is the middle line—the line of moderate labor and of comfort—that destroys gradually all sensibility to pain and produces contentedness. I cannot say I care for this contentedness; it undermines our aspirations and results in stagnation, mental and spiritual."

"Yes. Rest is fatal to genius," said Gale. "Only the unhappy can be really great—the passionate, the worried, the disquieted—the men who pray for peace because they do not understand its pernicious effects. Luckily, they fling it further from them with every thought and action." He looked round dreamily, with his eyes half-closed and his hands clasped.

The sun lit up his face and showed a deepening of the lines.

"You are so fanciful, Gale," observed the Earl. "But really, you know, passion, in any form, is *very* deplorable."

"It was the Man of Sorrows who conquered the world," said Lucas.

"Ah, yes," said the Earl. "Exactly."

"Poverty is excellent as a tonic," remarked Gale, meditatively, "but wealth often achieves really admirable eccentricity. It is difficult to institute reliable comparisons."

"One may have too much of a tonic, Mr. Gale," said Lucas. "Poverty, as we see it, is rather a horrible form of excellence."

"I wish you would tell us a little about your work, Mr. Lucas," said Lady Landor. "You never do, and we should be so interested."

"My work? We are simply physicians trying to deal with very painful cases, all of which are disgusting and most of them incurable. Doctors do not talk about a patient unless they have effected a cure. You see, the world dislikes a sick man."

"Our submerged tenth is certainly a curious patient," said Gale. "Why cannot we give him an overdose of chloroform and bury him quietly? He would be much happier, and we should be relieved from a responsibility that is very troublesome and annoying, though we neglect it with great energy."

"Nature certainly does seem to have a habit of laughing at all human suffering, and a determination to keep down utterly what we call the 'failures,'" said Innisbrook. "It might, perhaps, be better if we let her have her way to the end, instead of interfering half-heartedly. The evil would be diminished with the passing of each generation."

"It is not Nature's implacability that is harsh, but the corruption of humanity," asserted Lucas. "Our instincts alone would lead us to remedy the wrongs which we ourselves have brought about. But we do not work by instinct only. We have faith."

"Faith again!" murmured the Earl. "What a strange man!"

"Faith!" Gale repeated. "When you are rotting to your grave, what is the good of faith in a beneficence that is never exercised?"

"There cannot be such a thing as beneficence that is never exercised, so that your question wanders into impossibilities, Mr. Gale," said Lucas.

"Precisely what we maintain, Mr. Lucas," said the Earl. "Beneficence that never acts is a literal and psychical impossibility. We see plainly that there is no action. You perceive the inevitable conclusion?"

"I cannot hope to convert you, my Lord," the priest answered, sadly. "But you know the saying—and there is yet time—'*Experientia docet.*'"

"Yes, truly," put in Gale, "and the lesson is '*Ex nihil, nihil.*'"

"I oppose two such formidable pessimists with natural timidity," said Lady Landor, "but, of course, my woman's logical training tells me that you are completely wrong."

They all laughed.

"We are certainly too serious," said Gale.

"Yes, earnestness carried to excess is *very* deplorable."

"It is a crime."

"Pardon me," said the Earl. "It is worse than a crime. It is Bad Form."

"How would you define Bad Form, Innisbrook?"

"I should say it transcends definition," said Lucas.

"Yes. Undefinable, but deplorable."

"I never realize an abomination until I see it hall-marked by the approval of a majority," said Gale.

"Precisely. You have described the undefinable. Bad Form is the code of the majority."

"I suppose it is the fundamental law of Nature's constitution that a majority is inevitably wrong?"

"It seems so," Lady Landor assented. "I confess I dislike a majority—on principle."

"I always pay my cabby double fare for the same reason," remarked

Gale. "I am told that I act in defiance of the canons of economic science— By the way, what the deuce is economic science?"

"The game of 'beggar your neighbor' elaborated."

"Go on," said Innisbrook.

"I see. Well, and that indiscriminate overpayment is injurious, as it reacts on the majority. It is pleasant to feel that one's life has not been utterly wasted; that one has done a little harm."

"I heard this morning that Sir Geoffrey Blanchard swears he will take no proceedings. Any truth in the rumor?" the Earl inquired.

"I believe so," said Gale. "It is a pity. I don't admire the spirit of retaliation. I hope he will give way. Persistence would be rather terrible."

"A revised text: 'Vengeance is mine,' saith the Lord; 'but I will repay,' saith Sir Geoffrey Blanchard."

"Gretton says he saw them in Venice. Seemed deliriously happy. Poor little butterflies! They will soon learn the meaning of the three D's—Disappointment, Disillusion and Disgust."

"And then—the Deluge."

"It is just," said Lady Landor.

"Yes," said Gale, absent-mindedly. "But Venice is a pretty place. It seems a pity." His head sank forward and the pupils of his eyes contracted as he looked into the recesses of his own heart. Lucas had risen and was wandering among the flower-beds.

"Dorothy!" murmured the Earl. He leaned forward and clasped her hand, which she suffered him to take. His eyes rained glances of love, abandonment, suffering, appeal. "That we also were there!" he whispered, passionately.

"Oh, no, no, no!" she faltered. "They will be justly punished—fearfully punished."

She drew her hand away and the Earl swiftly resumed his nonchalant air and attitude as Gale opened his eyes dreamily and began to speak.

"Suppose a man has pursued an intrigue, a certain line of conduct, for

so many years that he ceases to perceive any special debasement in it. If the matter become public, his position must surely be curious. His thoughts and sensations are the same now as then. Yet to-day he is derided or execrated, while yesterday his name was acclaimed with admiration."

"It is the degree of notoriety, not of guilt, that counts. To be involved in a public scandal is damnation for the innocent and guilty alike."

"I suppose so. After all, to suffer one's name to be dragged into a scandal is evidence of foolish maladroitness."

"Exactly. Such maladroitness is *very* deplorable."

"Lady Landor," said Gale, "I hope these foolish young people will be happy. I am sorry for poor Verne. His case is simply the representative of ours. All the adorable women seem to be withdrawn from us. They are married to the wrong man. The other man is always the wrong man."

"But if the charming woman should love this other man?"

"Impossible! She never does. That she has married him is sufficient evidence."

"Our ethical system is certainly incomplete," remarked the Earl. "We have no considered analysis, no deducted method of treatment for this other man. He is the ultimate cause of nearly all immorality. Yet, as Conservatives, we unconsciously venerate a dim sense of vested rights, and therefore tolerate him."

"Speaking impersonally," said Gale, "I think the voluptuary is of all men the truest and most earnest reformer. He strikes the shrewdest blows at Old World prejudice and stubborn tradition. He has been severely misrepresented, he is considered selfish; but such selfishness as his is the incarnation of Liberalism."

"My dear Gale," said the Earl, "we have no Liberals now; Liberalism is dead. We have Radicals, and Radicalism is the root of all evil."

"Prejudice is blind."

"Yes, color-blind," laughed the Earl; "and as the exponent of aes-

theticism, your mission is to enlighten us?"

"Am I vain enough to attempt the impossible?" His glance wandered round the garden. "Upon consideration, I think I am," he added, lightly.

"What are you discussing now?" inquired Lucas, strolling toward them.

"Color," said Gale, laconically.

"Color!" repeated Lucas. He pointed upward.

"There is color, if you will. What could be more beautiful?"

The sky above them was an arch of deep blue pierced with golden sunbeams.

"It is very beautiful," said Gale. "But excess of beauty has an irritating effect on the nerves."

"We like simplicity and freshness; that is why primroses are so popular," said Lady Landor.

"The flower representative of one of the simplest and most unaffected of men," Gale murmured.

"How charming it would be to wander in some dainty woodland on a day like this, picking primroses light-heartedly," said Innisbrook.

"The one desire of my life is to pick primroses and live a quiet, rural life for the eternity of a day," exclaimed Lady Landor.

"Your desire could be easily gratified," said Gale.

"Let us unite," said the Earl, "and have a picnic—a glorious, old-fashioned picnic. Jove! we will. And we will go—of course, we will go—to Derbiton, the sublime Derbiton!"

"Where one seeks the shrine of St. Oblivion," added Gale.

"Lady Landor," cried Innisbrook, "you will not refuse to gratify me? Grace and Melville shall come; and you will, Gale, of course? Will you join us, Mr. Lucas?"

"Thank you," said the priest. "I should very much like to." His face was flushed with a strange light of pleasure.

"You know that I have intended to flee into unknown parts," said the Earl. "During the afternoon I have

almost matured my plans. The occasion shall serve as a farewell festivity. When shall it be?"

"Here is Mr. Landor," exclaimed Lucas.

"Settle for Thursday, and ask him to come," whispered Gale, with a smile. "I know he is engaged then."

"Ah, my Lord!" ejaculated the millionaire, gazing at Innisbrook with an expression of sadness, reproach, perplexity.

"What has happened?"

"What has happened? We are still wondering, still trying to realize the event. What *will* happen, now your Lordship's guiding hand has been removed?"

"I am afraid, Mr. Landor, that I don't care. I have ceased to take any interest in public affairs."

"Modern political life, without your Lordship—without the central figure—it is difficult to conceive!" exclaimed Landor, incoherently.

The Earl shrugged his shoulders. "I have ceased to take any interest in politics."

"Your success has been phenomenal, amazing. You abandon it, nullify it?"

"I have ceased to take any interest in success."

"You were the youngest Premier since the days of Pitt, and the most powerful. Supreme authority at your age—marvelous! You relinquish it?"

"I have ceased to take any interest in power, or the possession of power."

"Immense possibilities of doing good, of accomplishing great deeds, were open to you. You threw them away?"

"I have ceased to take any interest in great deeds."

"We have no one whom we can trust, no one in whom we can place full confidence. We had faith in you, my Lord!"

"Faith again!" murmured Innisbrook; "everyone is talking about this faith!"

"It is a gloomy outlook," said Landor, mournfully. "Anything may happen."

"I have ceased to take any interest in anything," said the Earl.

His face was calm and placid, his voice untouched by the throb of emotion. Yet his heart surged with bitterness and despair. The sense of chaos, the tumult of a vague questing, swept through his whole nature. But he gave no sign. He was the imperturbable Innisbrook, the man who was too cynical to disguise his own affection.

"A comprehensive statement of policy, principle, or whatever you call it," laughed Gale; "but how about picnics?"

"I withdraw my statement for the purpose of amendment. I take an intense interest in picnics."

"Picnics!" said Landor. "Good heavens! why picnics?"

"Why not?" rejoined Innisbrook. "Mr. Landor, in commemoration of my happy release from servitude, I have invited my friends to honor me by joining in a solemn picnic, to be accomplished at a charming village called Derbiton, on Thursday next. You will come, of course?"

"Mad!" murmured the millionaire. "Absolutely mad! On Thursday," he said, aloud. "I am sorry, but on Thursday I have three shareholders' meetings, to discuss schemes of reconstruction. I cannot possibly miss them."

"Most unfortunate!" said Gale.

"It is a pity," said Innisbrook. "But you might, perhaps, be able to join us later in the day. I hold Lady Landor to her promise."

"Did I promise?" she asked herself.

"We will go by train from Waterloo," said Innisbrook. "But I will make all arrangements and send you due intimation."

"We cannot escape," said Gale to Lucas.

"Escape? No." The priest's glance wandered to Lady Landor and rested on her face. "It is impossible," he said, slowly.

VII

"WELL, we are here," remarked Lady Melville, tentatively.

"Yes, we are here," growled Sir Francis. "And what, in heaven's name, do you think we are going to do now, Innisbrook?"

Sir Francis was bored. The brightness, the murmur of the spring, the caressing heat-rays, the colored sky, provoked a sad remembrance of expanses of blue-gleaming veldt, swept by the sun of Africa. Visions of game, big and small, afflicted him. Ah! he was bored.

"Do?" cried Innisbrook, contemptuously. "Do?" He waved his hand in a circle of indication. "Pick primroses, of course. For what else have we come?"

"Of course," echoed Gale. "As the graceful representative of Queen Titania, I command your obedience, fairies all. Disperse, vanish, evaporate! Yes, for the third part of a minute, hence! Some to pick primroses in the glare of the sun; some to pick primroses in quiet, sheltered spots; some to pick primroses—wherever they can find them; and some—the energetic ones—to recline busily under favoring trees. I am energetic." He threw himself on the ground, underneath a great beech tree, and tilting his hat forward, closed his eyes.

"I will assume the most arduous task of all," said Innisbrook. "Your primroses must be fastened in bunches. I will tie them."

Gradually they wandered away. "Dorothy, what do you think of Julian's wonderful proceedings?" asked Lady Melville.

"Men are very strange, dear. We cannot hope to understand them."

"But what is the matter with him?"

"Who can say?"

"He is throwing away the brightest career in England for the sake of a passing whim. Oh, it is shameful! Some day he will wish to take his position again, and he will find himself forgotten. We cannot resume at will what we have once rejected; the people forget, unless they are reminded perpetually; and all the prestige that surrounds his name will have vanished."

"Men will not readily forget Lord Innisbrook. And I think he has genius enough to re-create fame at any time, if fame shall have disappeared."

"Perhaps," said Lady Melville, with a trace of gratification. "But why should he act so recklessly, so foolishly? He is not a boy."

"He is little more."

"I think he is suffering in some way."

"Who is not?"

"But Julian is peculiarly sensitive."

"Do you consider it a fault?"

"A fault? No. It is regrettable, in a few ways; but there are many advantages. I wish some other people were more like Julian in this respect," she added, sighing, as she thought of Sir Francis.

Grace Melville knew her husband thoroughly. She had studied his nature during the first few years after their marriage, when she was moved by no predisposition to harshness, and she had been grieved at the result. She had not analyzed him logically or scientifically, but her womanly intuition—the vivid, brilliant gift of her sex—had outrun the slow processes of reasoning and discovered the key to his character. She knew that she understood him thoroughly. She was quite certain.

Innisbrook was wandering to and fro, lost in reverie.

"*Cor ne edite*," murmured Gale, as the Earl passed him.

"Eh!" exclaimed Innisbrook.

"Cute man, Pythagoras," said Gale, lazily.

"Pythagoras? Yes." His brow contracted.

"Do you know what is the matter with you, Innisbrook?"

"Partly. We cannot hope to understand ourselves completely."

"Heaven forbid that we should make an attempt so sacrilegious! But I was going to say, Innisbrook, that you are suffering from a disease—a disease with a long name. It is called the power-of-comprehending-the-sense-of-tears-in-mortal-things. The title is cumbrous, but self-explana-

tory. The disease is very real, and, in its acute form, extremely painful. A place such as this always brings on an attack."

"It was my own thought," said Innisbrook to himself. "My own thought, when I came here the other day."

"I myself have suffered from it. At times I cannot see even a bus conductor pursuing his business without feeling a poignant sense of the pathos underlying all life."

"Pathos is *very* deplorable," murmured the Earl.

"For God's sake, stop that!" cried Gale. "It is out of place here."

"Yes," he resumed, "all great men suffer acutely. We become stoics, epicureans, Jesuits, cynics— It is all the same. We know what it means;

"That cynics, white-gloved and cravat-ed, Are the cream and quintessence of all things,"

the Earl hummed.

"Eh?"

"An old jingle. . . . Fine people, the Jesuits!"

"The outcome of a fine system—the only system that really understands the needs of humanity, and provides for them."

"Not refusing to sacrifice a little 'divinity' in the process."

"The principle of unity is of more importance than a disputed text or superfluous tenet."

"Curious idea, Mariolatry," remarked Innisbrook.

"Curious, but attractive. Man generally deifies what he cannot understand. As an experiment, he has deified Woman, because she cannot understand *him*. No woman can understand a man's heart."

"And no man is worthy of a woman's," said Innisbrook, in a low tone. "We can only worship."

"And forget?" murmured Gale.

"And forget," the Earl repeated, mechanically. "Ah, yes, exactly."

After a pause: "The pagan mythology possessed a charm that was sadly wanting in the Christian, till Mariola-

try partly filled the gap," said Gale. "But the cult of the Blessed Virgin is an imperfect substitute for the old passionate devotion. One could worship an Aphrodite or Diana with some fervor."

"And the numerous minor divinities were doubtless very charming," said the Earl, with a smile. "Yes, love for the deities was not altogether ethereal."

"To love a woman is perdition, without recompense," said Gale. "But to love a goddess—eh, would not the delights repay damnation?" He began to chant, dreamily:

"O thou of divers-colored mind, O thou Deathless, God's daughter subtle-souled, lo, now, Now to the song above all songs—"

"But thou—thy body is the song, Thy mouth the music—"

Innisbrook chimed in.

"A mouth
Of many tunes and kisses—"

whispered Gale, reverently.

"A sublime subject," said the Earl. "Worthy even of your genius. Why not try it?"

"Eh, why not?" murmured Gale. "I desire to think," he said aloud. "Leave me alone, Innisbrook."

"To hold converse with yourself must be rather trying," said the Earl. "You are too brilliant."

"I used the word 'think' unadvisedly. Men of genius should never think. I am going, not to think, or to be brilliant, but simply to dream."

He closed his eyes.

VIII

INNISBROOK watched him for a little while, and then, looking round, caught a glimpse of Lady Landor's bonnet in the distance. Gazing earnestly, he perceived that she was apparently alone. He moved slowly toward her, his heart throbbing with the precarious tumults that always disquieted him when he knew that he should shortly see her face to face. The melody of singing birds floated through the air; green leaves rustled as the south

wind stirred them, and there was the indescribable hum of nature's revivification. Innisbrook noticed every vibration in the harmony, and as he did so perceived within himself a marvelous capability for absorbing happiness. "And yet I am miserable," he said, musingly, with a little wonderment.

Opening his eyes, Gale watched him as he went.

"For what else have we come?" he murmured, repeating the Earl's words, and laughing bitterly. "For this?"

He turned round so that he might not see them and, closing his eyes again, abandoned himself to the whims of humor.

"I have come to tie your primroses," said Innisbrook, holding out his hand. "Why, where are they?"

"I have been talking," she said, apologetically.

"Talking?"

"And thinking."

"Thinking!"

"Why not?"

"Women may think," said the Earl. "Men dare not."

"Why?"

"They are afraid of themselves."

"And women are not?" She asked smiling.

"What? Afraid of men?"

"No; of themselves?"

"Women believe in themselves."

"And men?"

"Men cannot. They don't believe. They know."

"And women are unable to realize their own nature?"

"They don't realize their power," said Innisbrook, sadly.

She moved uneasily. "But power is not nature."

"It is second nature."

"We are dual, then?"

"You are complex."

"What do you mean by complex?"

"Of manifold moods."

"Change prevents monotony, which is surely not desirable."

"And produces despair, which is surely *very* desirable."

"You say we are complex. We may

appear so, but it is because you do not try to understand us."

"You may be right. A man does not always analyze the woman he loves."

"No; he ruins her. *She* has to do the analyzing afterward."

"I said the woman he *loves*."

"Love is often only an expression of vanity."

"Yes," said the Earl, bitterly. "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity!" His eyes, eloquent of suffering, swept over her face.

"You know the old song," she said, lightly: "If this be vanity—if this be vanity."

"Exactly," said the Earl.

They had moved slowly forward, and were now completely withdrawn from the others. The trees sheltered them. As they walked they trampled down the flowers underneath. Overhead the sun blazed. In their hearts the lights of passion flickered unsteadily.

IX

"You have decided?" she asked. To say something was essential. Silence uncharged with intensity is often inexpressibly soothing, but silence in the acute form is unendurable.

"Decided?"

"What to do."

"Ah, no. I have not progressed quite so far. I have resolved what I will *not* do."

She looked at him inquiringly, and their glances, crossing, clashed and exchanged thrills indicative of danger. Annoyed at her imprudence, she averted her eyes.

"I shall no longer play the part of the modern Don Quixote, the representative of all the earnest fools who ridiculously imagine that injustice ought to be remedied. Why should I run tilts ludicrously against the windmills of Nature's blind negation, or roam round generally in the vague hope of accelerating an impossible millennium? I—and many others—have been trying to achieve a parallel to the old silly task—emptying the

ocean with a sieve. We deceive ourselves in vain. We must recognize our absolute impotence, and the sooner the better."

"Do you think so? If we are engrossed by the pursuit of an ideal, are we not happier than when despondency overwhelms us?"

"For a little while, perhaps, because we cheat ourselves. The reaction will come. Baseless enthusiasm will die away till we no longer oppose Nature, which will work out her own plans in her own way."

She placed her hand upon his arm, hesitated for a moment, trembling, as if about to remove it, but did not. "Julian, do you not think that your present frame of mind is a little morbid; that it may pass away?"

"I don't think so." Her touch bewildered him. "But time will show."

"Pessimism is not natural," she said, earnestly. "You have striven too hard; you have tried to do too much, and the reaction is correspondingly bitter. Perhaps you expected too much?"

"Yes, I expected too much," he repeated, slowly.

"The man who does the greatest deeds always suffers the greatest disappointment. To his eagerness the results appear very small, very insignificant."

"They do not appear at all," said the Earl.

"You do not perceive them. You look into the skies for an enduring record of your achievements; it is written in the byways, in little villages, in the hidden parts of our great cities."

"It is written very illegibly."

"But it is written. Your results are real, though they may be concealed."

"Very cunningly concealed."

"Your mood will pass, and you will see things as you used to see them. Brighter days will come, and you will laugh as you remember your despondency."

"I wish I could think so," he said, gloomily. "But this feeling of weariness, this sense of the futility of all

effort, has developed gradually, and will endure, I fear. It is not a sudden hysterical emotion. Constant proofs of the folly of persistence must bring their result. Our moral nature changes; we cease to believe in anything, to hope for anything. We drift. It needs only the climax of some strong personal grief or trouble, some vivid passion, to produce an explosion. The work is finished. We break up, and go to the bottom."

He threw out his arms with a despairing gesture. "It is very painful."

"But what—?"

"Has produced the final explosion? Can you ask?"

"I ask . . . nothing."

"And will give nothing!" he exclaimed, bitterly.

"What can I give you? Myself?"

Afraid to use his voice, he answered her with his eyes.

"Do you want me?"

"Do I want you!"

"But why?"

"I love you."

"Is that a sufficient reason?"

"You love me."

"Is that a sufficient reason?"

"Love requires no reason."

"No. Love is blind. . . . Why cannot I be blind?" she murmured. Longing to throw herself into his arms, she fought against her passion.

"A blind man can yet see his own heart. Love's blindness is true wisdom—the wisdom of happiness."

"You can see no wrong?"

"There is no wrong, or convention would not interfere," he said. "Convention never condemns wrong."

"To you, convention is nothing. To me, it represents the world's acknowledgment—reluctant, perhaps—that some things are still too sacred to be trifled with."

"Love like ours cannot be called trifling."

"If I give you myself, I must give you also my faith, my loyalty, my honor, my God. . . ." The tears stood in her eyes. "Julian, do you want them? Shall I give them to you?"

"Give me a primrose," he said, gently. He dared not tell this woman to abandon what he worshipped her for reverencing.

She stooped, and, picking a few of the flowers, handed them to him. As she did so, he leaned forward and, taking her in his arms, rained kisses on her lips, on her face and hands and hair. "It is the last day!" he cried, passionately; and turning swiftly, fled from her.

X

"MR. GALE, please get up and amuse us."

"You are bored, Lady Melville?"

"Bored!" cried Sir Francis. "Egad! bored isn't the word."

"Dear! dear!" expostulated Gale.

"I don't seem to appreciate Innisbrook's fads," said the angry baronet. "Egad! no more picnics for me."

"My dear Melville, what has annoyed you?"

"He has nothing to do," Lady Melville explained.

"Could anything be more desirable?" said Gale. "Nothing to do—but dream! Delightful!"

"I don't indulge in day-dreams," said Sir Thomas, testily.

"Then spend your time profitably in abusing Innisbrook."

"I have done what I could."

"Like most people," said Lady Melville. "Poor Julian!"

"The art of true criticism, of perfect abuse, is praise," said Gale.

"It is difficult to criticise adequately such a man as Lord Innisbrook," said Lucas, smiling.

"We do not often get such a man to criticise. The type comes only with alternate generations. Nature must have breathing-time."

"A little flattery is refreshing," said Lady Melville, cordially. "I scold Julian myself occasionally; but I don't like other people to be ungracious."

"But what is his object in bringing us out here to fool about doing nothing?" Sir Francis complained.

"You are unfortunate, Melville," said Gale, pityingly. "You occupy the sad middle line. The rustic can come into a place like this and be perfectly quiescent. He does not require to think or to dream. He is stolid. He is happy. You, unfortunate man, crave action; you wish perpetually to be doing something. In default, you try to think, when there is no material, and you are bored. We who are of more delicate fibre—we geniuses—" he waved his hand benignantly—"require neither to think nor to act. We dream. The country has for us a sense of limitation which suggests something beyond, something more supreme. We dream. So the rustic is happy; wretchedly, disgustingly happy. You are bored, discontented, moody. We are sublimely miserable."

"I cannot see where the advantage comes in."

"All great men should be unhappy in an ethereal way. What is more despicable than self-satisfaction?"

"You have quaint ideas," said Lady Melville, regarding him curiously.

"Egad, I believe you are all mad," Sir Francis growled. "You, and Innisbrook, and the rest of you."

"It is partly madness, partly affection," said Gale, placidly. "I don't blame you, Melville; you are a type of the world, of the unreasoning majority. You cannot understand us, and instead of studying us as an interesting problem, you save yourselves trouble by calling us insane. But, my dear man, that we are eccentric proves our sanity—that is to say, partial sanity. Entirely mad people are dreadfully monotonous."

"You consider discontent a virtue?" said Lucas, thoughtfully.

"Is progress possible without it?"

"Do we progress with it? Civilization and progress are no doubt often considered synonymous. But are they really the same?"

"A difficult question. But remember, Lucas, you see chiefly the lower side of civilization."

"Yes," acknowledged the priest, sadly. "I know."

"Your work must be very discouraging," said Gale. "Out of a thousand people who pass through your hands, how many do you think you really influence?"

"Perhaps one."

"And you can keep on? Hypocrisy with some, stubborn indifference with the greater part; one real case, possibly, in a year. And you don't lose heart? Wonderful!"

"If we get one in ten years, is it not worth working for?"

"For my own part," said Gale, "I do not believe the average ruffian has a soul. Or if he have, it is certainly not worth troubling about."

"Is it true that the Dean of Orwell has gone over?" Lady Melville inquired.

"Yes," said Lucas. "It is a pity."

"Does such a conversion have any result? Does it influence other people?"

"Inevitably."

"I don't see why," said Gale. "If a man who has been ministering at the altars of one Church for thirty years suddenly turns round and denies the validity of his orders, and of all his previous acts, I consider him a vacillating fool. By his own confession, for the greater part of his life he has been deceiving himself and all who would listen to him. A man who cannot make up his mind on what must to him have been the one great question of existence, before passing—well, over the line of middle age, is evidently an imbecile, or utterly incapable of inspiring trust. In any case, why should he be considered more worthy of credence now than before?"

"I do not judge him. A man must follow his conviction, though it compel him to dispute what he has spent a lifetime, almost, in affirming. If we are honest and sincere, we must leave the rest to Providence."

"No offense, Lucas. But, speaking generally, Christians nowadays appear to find more pleasure in damning one another than in trying to save those who are damning themselves. You know, I admit exceptions."

"It is an old reproach. I can only give you the old answer—quarreling is, in its way, a sign of earnestness. Men don't dispute when they take no interest."

"Egad," said Sir Francis, "I don't understand this man going over, though. I cannot see where the 'mystic attraction' of the Roman Church comes in. The only Romish priest I ever knew personally was a disreputable old creature with chronic catarrh and an inveterate hatred for anything in the guise of cleanliness."

"You cannot understand these matters, Melville," said Gale. "You are constitutionally too narrow-minded. You argue from the exceptions."

"Men are usually shallow or fickle," Lady Melville laughed.

"Yes," retorted Gale. "Only women are constant."

"And dogs," said Sir Francis. "Remember Argus."

"Argus? Who was Argus?"

" . . . And as he spake, the dog Argus died. Twenty years had he waited, and saw his master at the last, . . ." Sir Francis quoted.

"Ah, yes; Ulysses's dog," said Gale. "I remember. But I did not know you were a classical man, Melville." He looked keenly at the baronet, who colored.

"I am fond of dogs," he muttered.

"A delightful person, Ulysses," said Gale. "One of Nature's liars."

"Liars? Who is talking about liars?" exclaimed Innisbrook, appearing unexpectedly.

"As a diplomatist, you naturally feel interested," said Gale.

"I protest," cried the Earl.

"Diplomacy is a fine art. So is lying. Only an artist can appreciate the delicate shades, the degrees of excellence."

"I prefer sincerity."

"So does Mr. Gale," said Lucas.

"Just so. But I was speaking on behalf of the great emancipated. The New Morality, you know, is untrammeled by old shackles; a lie is viewed on its merits as an artistic performance. It may be a consummate lie, polished and complete; a partial lie;

or, most charming of all, an inferential lie."

"How was the subject started?" Innisbrook asked.

"Melville's fault," said Gale.

"Egad, no; you abused Ulysses."

"I simply made a moral remark. Is that abuse?"

"Undoubtedly," said the Earl. "A great abuse."

"I could not quite see the connection, but there was a dog in it," Lady Melville remarked.

"Not a woman?"

"Certainly not," said Gale. "We were discussing constancy."

"You yourself said 'only women are constant,'" Lady Melville exclaimed, reproachfully.

"Merely an example of the inferential lie," said Gale, calmly. "But, speaking seriously, constancy in a man would be pitiable; in a woman, terrifying. Consider the case of constancy in love. The ignorant applaud it. Why? What we call constancy is really deficiency. The man, or the woman, possesses a heart that is capable of only one emotion; obviously, it is an inefficient organ."

"A little while ago you were attacking the poor Dean of Orwell for alleged inconstancy," Lucas remarked.

"I carefully avoid consistency. Continuity is an abomination; only the helpless or stupid adopt it. These poor politicians, for instance, are bound down, tied to its observance, by public opinion." He affected to shudder.

"They wear their fetters lightly," said the Earl.

"I am glad you have withdrawn from politics, Innisbrook; the turmoil and rowdyism have ruined many men who might have been superb dandies or voluptuaries."

"I am happy, then," laughed the Earl. "I still have my opportunity."

Gale looked at him sadly. "I hope you are not going to waste your life in driveling with happiness. Choose the higher part, Innisbrook."

"Happiness!" the Earl murmured. "Ah, there is little choice about it."

"By the way," said Gale, "how do we get back?"

"We drive from here to Bellingham, and go to town by special train. I have arranged for carriages."

"How far away is Bellingham?"

"About twenty miles."

"Good heavens! But why not go from here direct? We could have a special from Derbiton as easily as from Bellingham, surely!" cried Sir Francis.

"There were difficulties," said Innisbrook. "Bellingham is a junction."

It was quite true, there were difficulties—difficulties that he had foreseen and provided; difficulties that could not be surmounted by the man who had created them. For Innisbrook wanted this long drive through the shadows, and had looked forward to it as the culmination of any pleasures which the day should bring. He had dreams of a music that should make the outer stillness very beautiful; of a comforting darkness, as their horses' hoofs struck sharply on the country roads and lanes. Or perhaps, if the night were clear, and the moon shone bravely, and the blue stars gleamed, a strange contentment might not fail, as they swept on steadily and watched the quivering lamps keep step across the firmament.

The Earl took Gale's arm. "The carriages will hold four," he said. "We will go together. You will not refuse to come with me and amuse me? I could not stand one of those." From the spot to which he pointed came the sound of laughter and loquacity.

"All right, old man," said Gale. "Be comforted. I will come."

"It is the last day," said the Earl, inconsequently.

"Yes," said Gale. He understood.

XI

THERE were three carriages. Lady Landor, Innisbrook, his sister and Gale occupied the first.

They started in the midst of a scene of strange brilliancy. The moon had

just risen, and shone with a weird vividness. The night was calm, there was no wind, and the sense of stillness pervaded nature almost oppressively. The heat of the afternoon had not wholly passed away, and the oddity of an August evening in early Spring seemed quaint, incongruous, and yet not unrefreshing. Only here and there a dimness of gray mist gave warning of a possible disturbance, of a shadowing of moon and stars, a widening expanse of clouds and the ultimate descent of welcome rain, suggesting a murmur of breezes to come, of coolness and eventual withdrawal of light.

A few villagers, drawn together by the unusual excitement, watched their preparations and raised a faint cheer as they drove away.

"They don't know who we are; they don't know what we have come for; yet they cheer us. Why?" asked Lady Landor.

"Our carriages suggest a certain respectability. As Englishmen, they love this respectability. Naturally, they cheer," said Gale.

"I have done many foolish things," said the Earl, "but I can truly lay claim to one redeeming virtue: I have never taken the slightest notice of the applause or condemnation of a mob."

"You have experienced both, Innisbrook."

"Yes. A mob is always fickle."

"I protest against public opinion," said Gale. "Take one thoroughly ignorant man: Who regards his opinion or considers his judgment in any way? Put together all the thoroughly ignorant men in the kingdom, and we are told that the sum of their stupidity is to be reverenced, regarded with awe. It is absurd."

"Yes," assented Innisbrook, slowly, "public opinion is *very* absurd—sometimes."

"It is an abomination. I know that I talk about it too often, but the strangeness of being for once really in earnest runs away with me. It is ridiculous to see the intelligent people hopelessly dominated by the illogical.

The only safe rule, particularly in politics, is to regard the people as being utterly and inevitably in the wrong."

"*Vox populi*," the Earl remarked, "*vox—*"

"*Diaboli!*" said Gale.

"Exactly."

"I suppose popularity has charms. But the sense of unpopularity, of isolation, must be supremely comforting."

"Yes," said the Earl. "Unpopularity is a source of great satisfaction. I have experienced it, as you know. Absolute isolation is superb."

"If the majority applaud you, you are certainly doing wrong. If a minority follow you, you are probably acting right. If no one support you—if you be utterly alone—your conduct is assuredly irreproachable, ideally perfect."

"You should bring out a political manual—'The Ethics of Statesmanship,' or 'The Morality of Parliamentary Life.'"

"There is no morality in Parliamentary life, and very little statesmanship nowadays."

"There are no statesmen taking an active part in public affairs, now that you have retired from the arena, Julian," said his sister, with a smile.

"My dear, compliments are *very* deplorable."

"I don't agree with you, Innisbrook. Compliments are the sunbeams that pierce the locked chambers of our hearts; or, to put the case more seriously, they are the light courtesies that relieve the grimness of enmity and make the interminable campaigns of life's warfare endurable."

"My dear Gale, please do not 'put' anything 'seriously.' It is an offense against nature. Life was intended to be one long jest."

"A hollow jest—like those in a pantomime."

"Yet children appreciate them."

"So do men and women—at their proper value."

"That is our great fault. We regard ourselves as men and women. We think that we know. In reality,

we are children in the universal pantomime. For centuries we have failed to understand the privileges of childhood. We have trained ourselves to despise them. We must change and try to educate ourselves to look at things from the standpoint of youth; to realize a little of its philosophy; to comprehend a little of its wisdom."

"And the consummation is—that we may laugh at the clown?"

"Exactly."

"Is he not too grotesque to produce anything but tears?"

"I have heard that children can cry," said Lady Landor.

"Can they?" said Gale. "I never see real children," he added, apologetically.

"Reverting to your proposed booklet," said Innisbrook, "why not call it 'A Guide to Politics; or, How to Succeed in the Trade?'"

"God forbid that I should be a guide to anyone," said Gale, hastily. His face, which usually bore a mask of light cynicism, was flushed with an emotion that he had forgotten to conceal—the emotion of a man whose delicate sensitiveness has been wrought into a state of nervous tension by the occurrences of the day.

"At any rate," said the Earl, gently, "you can be the Philosopher—and Friend."

There was a break in the conversation, and they listened to the echo that accompanied their progress; to the sound of the rotating wheels; to the rumble of the carriages behind them. Clouds were stealing across the sky, leaving half the disk in shadow, and encroaching slowly on the other half. One by one the stars were hidden; the wind began to rise; the line of hedges was lost in the gathering darkness.

"There will be a storm," said Gale. "And the fairies will get wet."

"Dear little fairies!" exclaimed Innisbrook.

Keenly responsive to every impression that fancy could suggest, the thoughts of all were led by the allusion into a groove of delicate romance. The countless fables of the little people, informed with a charming sense

of unreality, of spiritual slightness warring with human grossness, appealed vividly to the imagination, and induced a spirit of yielding to the influence of the atmosphere, urging the delights of retrospective reverie.

The rain began to fall, slowly at first, and with a distinctness ominous of the deluge to ensue; the darkness became intense; the wind rose into uproar. Inside the carriage, they could see nothing. Lamps had not been provided. They could hear the turmoil of the outer conflict, but they did not try to raise their voices in antagonism. Occasionally one leaned over and whispered in another's ear. That was all. Whispering was more effective than shouting.

Groping in the dark, Innisbrook stretched out his hand stealthily, and taking Dorothy's, held it closely clasped within his own. She trembled as the contact thrilled her. He knew it, felt it, and increased the pressure. "It is the last day!" he whispered, with his face close to hers; "the last day!"

So they traveled, while the storm endured; hand in hand and, in the spirit, heart to heart, while pulses leapt, and hot blood surged, and passions, dreams and strange imaginings possessed him. An hour was passed in this half-grasp of semi-happiness; an hour of which each second brought its wave of tossing joy, crested with the pain of further longings, eager, though unvoiced, outcries for the attainment of impossibilities. Thought was busy with a fierce intenseness, but the only word that passed between them was the whisper in the moment of the first surprise. "It is the last day!" And this was the refrain that floated through the whole of their conceptions.

The storm ceased suddenly. The rain was ended; the clouds had passed away; the wind was gradually subsiding. Overhead, the moon shone with a splendor enhanced by the temporary effacement; the stars came out again, and the sky quivered with their flashing signals. Through the windows could be seen once more the

outlines of the country, the spectral hedges, trees standing darkly in the background of a meadow flooded with light, sleeping cottages with shutters barred, and here and there a house, with gleam of lamp or fire, in the distance.

There was little conversation; the scene was too beautiful. So they watched, for the most part in silence, till at last the twenty miles were covered and they drove into the station.

"It is the beginning of the end," murmured Innisbrook, as they wandered disconsolately in the vast solitudes.

XII

LUCAS stood on the pavement, facing his own little house.

Innisbrook's carriage, which had brought him from Waterloo, was already lost in the far shadows. The street was deserted; no form of reveler or wayfarer disturbed the dingy solitude. The rows of feeble lamps revealed only the motionless form of the priest. Pensive, preoccupied, he stood alone, feeling, as he was, simply a unit in the sum of London's vast unhappiness.

The bell of St. John's tolled one.

Lucas started, looked round uneasily, and at last walked slowly to the meeting of the streets. Turning, he retraced his way till he was again opposite to his own door. Opening it with his latch-key, he passed in.

The hall was in darkness, but with the confidence of one who knew each inch of ground and what was on it, he hung up his hat and coat, locked and bolted the door and, without striking a light, mounted the stairs noiselessly.

He had been perfectly quiet; yet a door was opened, and someone spoke in a low voice.

"Is it you, Mr. Lucas?"

"Yes."

"Shall you want anything?"

"Nothing, thank you, Mrs. Standish."

"There is a letter for you. I have put it on your table."

"A letter? Thank you. Good-night, Mrs. Standish."

"Good-night, sir."

He entered his room.

A lamp, carefully trimmed and turned down, furnished a small but sufficient light. A fire, low, but clear and bright, emitted a cheerful glow. On the hearth were his slippers, placed at an angle that enabled them to absorb the heat gradually. His chair was drawn up in front of the fire, and his footstool placed at the exact interval required.

"Mrs. Standish is very thoughtful," he reflected.

He washed his hands, turned up the light and took a book from the table. It was a Bible. Opening it at the place marked by a white silk ribbon, he began to read. It was the tenth chapter of St. Mark.

He read slowly but steadily, pausing at the fifteenth verse. Then he went on:

" . . . Lo, we have left all
"and followed thee.

"No man that hath left house, or
"brethren, or sisters, or father, or
"mother, or wife, or children . . .
"for my sake . . . but shall re-
"ceive an hundredfold now in this
"time . . . with persecutions
" . . ."

"With persecutions," he murmured.

" . . . and in the world to
"come eternal life . . ."

His eyes were filled with sadness, and his heart with pain. He leaned back in his chair, relaxing his grasp and holding the Bible listlessly, so that the leaves slipped rapidly over. After a little while he opened it again, turning the pages of Genesis till he came to the account of Jacob's servitude for Rachel.

" . . . And Jacob served seven
"years for Rachel, and they seemed
"unto him but a few days, for the love
"which he had to her."

"But she loved him," he murmured, closing the Book. A line from the Great Song haunted him persistently:

"Come, my beloved, let us go forth

into the field; let us lodge in the villages."

His heart throbbed as he thought of the green fields, with the flowers, the sunshine, the beauty. The events of the day recurred to him, memory marshaling each detail in due sequence and bringing slowly into visionary view a long succession of incidents.

"I spoke to her four times," he said, dreamily. Rising, he paced restlessly up and down the room.

"It is ridiculous," he exclaimed. "What is the matter with me? I will not be dominated by such absurdities. I must work."

He moved to the table, took up a pen and looked for paper. Then, for the first time, he noticed the letter of which his housekeeper had spoken. He opened it. It was from Landor and contained a cheque for £500, for the expenses of the mission. "He is a good man," he said, thoughtfully. "He does not waste his money."

He sat down on a hard, uncushioned chair and wrote doggedly for an hour. But words came with difficulty; the concentration of thought became more and more arduous, the impulse of will power more and more feeble. At last he abandoned his task in despair.

"I must pray," he said; but he had not the strength to shake off his depression. His head sank forward, and, supporting it with his hands, his elbows resting on the table, he sat quietly.

In front of him was the ebony cross before which he had so often bent in reverence. Around him were books of sermons, theological works, histories, manuals, expositions of creeds. But his thoughts were far away in the free woodland, and he dreamed of days beneath blue skies, while birds were singing, and caressing breezes laughed in the face of heaven. "Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field." Her face, lit up with tenderness, was very close to him, shining with the beauty that no other woman in the world could wear. "Four times," he repeated, thinking of the

words he had exchanged with her; her attitude on each occasion; the manner and the meaning of her questions or replies; the changing tones of voice, the slightly varying inflection; the passing glance, of interest, understanding or inquiry; the pressure of her hand at the final good-bye . . . all were remembered, and the recollection lingered over, strangely, dreamily and sadly.

The hours were passing, and the darkness with them. In the street the lamps gleamed feebly with a pale, whitish flame that seemed unneeded. His own lamp on the table began to flicker as the oil was drained away. He did not notice that it was burning. The fire was out. His slippers, quite cold, lay on the hearth.

XIII

"Your mistress is in, Betts, of course?"

"Yes, sir. Her Ladyship returned an hour ago."

"See if she has retired."

Enveloped in a heavy, fur-trimmed overcoat and still wearing his hat, he stood, meditatively, cigar in mouth. "Eh, it is finished," he said to himself. "And to-day I have made, I suppose, a million."

He put his hands in his pockets and stared across the room. "A million. . . . Not bad for one day." He turned round and gazed at the fire. It was dull. He stirred it with his foot, crushing the coal with the heel of his boot till the flames sprang up and little jets danced along the top. He warmed his hands. "One can do a great deal with a million, and I have now—let me see—two, three, four, five . . . Eh?"

"Her Ladyship has not yet retired."

"My things . . . thanks." He threw himself into a chair. "Take my boots off and get me some slippers. . . . That will do; I have all I require. Just put that bottle on the table—no, not that, the other one—and a glass. That is all; you may go. . . . Eh, Betts!"

"Sir?"

"You look tired, Betts. Eh?"

"Tired, sir?"

"Late hours, Betts. I'm afraid I've kept you up latterly. Everyone who can manage it should be in bed by ten o'clock. Yes, in bed early, and up before the rest of the world is awake—that's the way to get on, Betts."

"Yes, sir," deferentially.

"It is true, Betts, that we cannot always follow the rule. An occasional deviation may be advantageous. Yes," thoughtfully, "it may mean a million."

He took the cork from the bottle and filled his glass slowly. "As I have kept you up, Betts, I must recompense you. You would better take a holiday."

"A holiday, sir?"

"Yes, Betts, a holiday. Have you any brothers, sisters, or so on, you would like to see? Eh? No, of course not; I remember. Well, go to some quiet little place at the seaside, and have a week's fresh air, you know. You may go to-morrow—that is, to-day. Ask Mr. Stewart for some money. See, here you are." He took a letter from his pocket, tore off the blank half-sheet, and scribbled a few words in pencil.

"I'm not a bad sort of man to deal with," reflected the millionaire, as he sipped his Curaçoa, after the valet, with many thanks, had disappeared.

He sipped more than one glass of Curaçoa, and smoked more than one cigar, before he at last rose. "I don't think I'll disturb Dorothy to-night," he said, thoughtfully, pausing at the door of his bedroom. "No." He went in.

Undressing rapidly, he turned out the lights, pulled up the blinds, and got into bed. But he did not, as was usual with him, fall asleep at once. The heavy strain of the day's events had produced a correspondent impression on the nerves, and the reflex action caused the brain still to work actively. "One does not make a million every day," he muttered, as if apologizing to himself for his inabil-

ity to compass rest. The moon shone through the window and revealed the different objects in the room, casting fantastic shadows on the walls. Over the mantelpiece loomed two dark frames. They contained likenesses, painted from photographs, of his father and mother. His eye, following the shadows, rested on them. The portraits could not be traced, but memory filled the void with living features. "Poor old folks," he murmured. "I wish they could have lived a little longer and seen the brighter days."

"Eh, the struggles we had. . . . Those were hard times." Recalling the years of poverty, with their enforced self-denial, he could not suppress an inward cry of exultation as he thought of the vast change that had taken place. "Eh, I am a rich man now—a power in the world. My name is known through England. It shall be better known, too, before long," he added, with a tightening of the lips.

He closed his eyes, letting fancy range freely over a wide vista of coming triumphs. An old thought struck him suddenly with fresh poignancy, arresting exhilaration. "It is true I have no son," he murmured, "but then, . . . all in good time."

His gaze wandered to the window. He could catch a glimpse of the stars. His restlessness increased. The Curaçoa began to work in his head.

"This is wretched," he muttered. "I wonder what Dorothy is doing?"

He pictured her lying asleep, with her face upturned to the light, her hair gleaming, her breasts rising and falling, and one white arm, perhaps, thrown out unconsciously upon the coverlet. A stray curl, uncontent with orderly arrangement, would rest upon her temple, rustling almost imperceptibly, and her breathing excited tiny wavelets of air currents; her lips would be parted slightly—very, very slightly. If she dreamed, faint shadows would chase one another in evanescent lines across her face, as varying emotions rose and passed.

But, perhaps, she was awake. . . . He stretched out his arm impatiently. She was tired: it had been a long day; too tired, and unable to rest. Tossing uneasily to and fro; turning, first on one side, then on the other, and swiftly back again; closing her eyes in a vain questing, opening them in disappointed disquietude; alternately fretting nervously, or gazing, with imagined resignation, out, far out, through the window, through the night, into the maze of intermingled stars; calling up strange recollections of fragments of rhymes, odd thoughts, almost forgotten memories, trifles of unconsidered actions.

The Curaçoa was working strongly. The air was really somewhat chilly, yet the room seemed stifling. He thrust back the bed-clothes with a gesture of irritation, half-rising, but sinking back again in indecision. At last, with a sudden movement, he sprang from the bed, stood for a moment, then, putting on a gown, walked quickly out.

Reaching his wife's room, he tapped very slightly and opened the door. She was awake. Wearing a light gown, she lay on an ottoman in front of the window. A light shawl, which seemed merely a frail web of insubstantiality, was thrown carelessly over her shoulders. Her feet, coiled up within the folds of her gown, were only partially concealed.

"Not in bed?"

"I couldn't sleep."

"Nor could I; strung up, somehow. Tired, dear?"

"No; only wide awake."

"You will catch cold, sitting like that."

Collecting an armful of wraps, he threw them over her. "Thinking?"

"A little."

"Had a pleasant day?"

"Yes; thank you."

"Not bored, eh? That woman—what's her name?—Melville—can't stand her myself. Rather trying, eh?"

"No."

"What did you do?"

"Nothing, specially."

"Gale there?"

"Yes."

"Queer fellow. I like him, though. Not half so mad as Lord Innisbrook."

"Why do you say that?"

"What?"

"That Lord Innisbrook is mad?"

"Isn't he? No sane man could be so idiotic."

"In what way?"

"In every way. What is he doing now?"

"Who can tell? We cannot understand him."

"Eh, I think I can. I understand most people."

Her eyes rested on his face for a moment, wonderingly.

"I have made a million to-day," he said, after a pause.

"Oh!"

"A million," he repeated. "That is to say, if things turn out all right. They will, of course; I have looked after them."

She moved restlessly.

"Are you sure you are quite well?" he asked, anxiously.

"Oh, yes, thanks," weakly.

"Not cold at all?"

"No. . . . How long will he stay?" she thought.

He took her hand and began to stroke it.

"When will he go?" she asked herself, uneasily. His manner alarmed her; there was a strangeness in his touch, a thrill of fierceness. A vague fear crept over her. Unconsciously she shuddered.

"I am sure you are cold," he said. His eyes gleamed curiously.

"It would be too horrible," she thought, with passionate repulsion. The scene beneath the trees came back to her; the appeal; the momentary conflict; the invasion of kisses. And the homeward drive; the sudden storm; the pressure of his hand; the intensity of unhappiness and love in his murmur, "It is the last day," and the brightening of the heavens, barring secrecy and all further bitter-sweet abandonment.

"Could I not keep his caresses just for this one day?" she cried in her heart, despairingly.

PART II

XIV

"You have already seen Miss Grey, I think. . . . Miss Barr, Mr. Verrall. Miss Barr is an old friend of Miss Grey, Verrall."

"Just so," acquiesced Verrall.

"Bless, O Lord, this food to our use and us to Thy service, for Christ's sake, Amen; will you have beef or mutton, Miss Barr?" said Grey, rapidly.

"Your luggage has arrived, Mr. Verrall," said Miss Grey.

"My luggage! Ah, yes, of course. Really, I had quite forgotten it."

"Forgotten it?"

"Completely. The railway people have sent it up, then?"

"I must remember that I am not carrying Wakelin about with me," he reflected. "I suppose I shall acquire the habit of looking after myself—and luggage—in time."

"Mr. Verrall," said Miss Barr, suddenly, "what do you think about the policy of England?"

"What's that?" exclaimed Grey.

"I think it is disgraceful!" cried Miss Barr. "It is wicked."

"In what particular?" asked Grey. "I have not seen the paper to-day, or, in fact, for several days."

"In every particular. I never read the papers, and I had not heard anything. But I met Miss Crawley to-day, and she told me all about it. It is frightful to think of the poor Christians being massacred by those awful men. And we are supporting their murderers! It is a national disgrace!"

"Oh, the old story! It does seem as if we ought to interfere, but we really don't know enough about the matter to judge fairly. We may be sure that Lord Willoughby is doing all that can be done."

"I am sure he is not. The *Daily Infallible* says—"

"You said you had not read the papers."

"I haven't; but, of course, when Miss Crawley told me, I bought to-day's."

"The *Daily Infallible* is scarcely a reliable paper," said Verrall. "I have been told that it is consistently illogical."

"A blatant paper," assented Grey, decidedly; "says anything to push forward its propaganda, and retracts the next day, if any advantage can be gained. Vehement denunciation is its line, I fancy."

"I am not judging from what the *Daily Infallible* says, but from what I know. I have been studying the question for a long time, and I'm sure that England's policy is disgraceful."

"And she knew nothing about it until to-day. Really, a remarkable woman," murmured Verrall. "A very remarkable woman." He looked at her admiringly.

"It's a big question," said Grey. "There are so many complications, and there is always the imminent hazard of a European war."

"I cannot see why."

"No, of course you cannot. Women never understand politics."

"Well, what does a European war matter if we are on the side of Right?"

"It matters to the extent of perhaps half a million lives," said Grey, shrugging his shoulders.

"If it is in God's cause—"

"If you begin that argument, where can you draw the line? We have no right to precipitate a war because we imagine it to be in God's cause. Every fanatic argues like that."

"We are not fanatics. And I really don't care what you say. I'm perfectly sure I'm right. Nothing can alter my opinion. England's policy is shameful. Don't you think so, Mr. Verrall?"

"I take no interest in foreign politics," said Verrall, wearily. "Besides, I have not sufficient information to enable me to form a considered judgment. One cannot rely on newspapers; they are so inaccurate, so bigoted and misleading. It is *very* deplorable."

"I was reading some anecdotes about Tennyson the other day," Grey

remarked. "He seems to have been rather a gourmand."

"He was not perfect, doubtless."

"I always think it is a pity that Tennyson wrote what he did," said Miss Barr. "It seems sad that he should have wasted his talents in writing things like 'Maud' or 'The Idylls of the King.' Some of his poems are very pretty, of course; but there is always a sense of something missing. There is no Moral Idea."

"You think he might have employed his time more profitably?"

"He could have written splendid tracts, if he had tried," she said, thoughtfully. "But people don't think of their responsibility in our days. They will write novels, or do anything, to gain notoriety."

"You dislike novels?"

"I used to read many, very many, when I was a girl. But I don't read any work of fiction now."

"Except, possibly, the Bible," murmured Verrall.

When the ladies left them the two men lingered for a little while.

"Miss Barr is rather curious," said Grey. "A most intelligent woman, and surprisingly well informed on a very large range of subjects, but a little hysterical, you know. You will like her immensely when you know her better. Auntie is very fond of her."

Verrall smiled. "I like Auntie," he said to himself. "She is certainly not discursive."

XV

"Now where the dickens am I?" said Innisbrook.

Lifting his head, he gazed round the room. The position of the windows bothered him; the furniture was strange, very strange; the hanging pictures struck no chord of old acquaintanceship. Everything on which his eyes rested was unfamiliar. He seemed completely alone, isolated from the inanimate friends with which he had established the intimate associations of many years' comradeship.

The sun shone unreluctantly and the air was instinct with a peculiar freshness, suggesting the green expansion of shooting leaves, glistening through the dewdrops. He was aware of an odd rumbling, the subdued echo of the roar of clashing waters and of a pervading scent of the saltiness of sea breezes.

"I remember," he meditated. "This is Seabridge."

"Yes," he continued, slowly, "I, Julian Verrall, Earl of Innisbrook, am at Seabridge. Good God! what for?

"I arrived last night, didn't I? Yes; and made the acquaintance of a small house, a small man—no, I made his acquaintance a week ago—an admirable lady and Miss Barr. I certainly must not forget Miss Barr." He laughed. "To-day I shall make the acquaintance of numerous small boys. I wonder what the little beggars will be like? I have come, I suppose, for the occupation of small distractions. Apparently I have found them."

He sat up in the bed.

"I must get my position settled definitely. Yesterday morning I was the Earl of Innisbrook, not unrenowned, but an incomprehensible eccentric." He smiled bitterly. "To-day I am Julian Verrall, partner in the scholastic establishment known as Oriel House. Will they understand me any better down here? . . . I think not. Ah! I am mad! . . . A madman seeking shadows of forgetfulness; imagining I am going to discover Faith—the Faith that everyone seems able to grasp—because I have hidden myself in a little seaside village. Well, I could not have come to a better place. I make a clear commencement in new ways. I am free from every prejudice and restriction of habit. Providence has a fair chance."

Rising and dressing hastily, he made his way out of the house. The long broad street in which he found himself had an appearance of charming coolness. The town had just emerged from the annual Spring cleaning that preceded the advent of the season, and the houses, with whitened stucco,

glistened in the sunlight. The new-made roads and the leveled footpaths presented an aspect of orderly regularity, of care and arrangement. The dominant impression was of cleanliness, neatness, freedom from anxiety.

He began to feel light-hearted, buoyant.

He walked straight forward, gradually leaving the houses behind. On his left hand were fields, each with an oval patch carefully turfed, rolled and guarded by unsightly hurdles. On his right hand were more fields. Conspicuous boards, disfigured with great gilt letters, proclaimed the ownership and purpose, though the latter was self-evident.

"Cricket fields!" he exclaimed. "There appear to be several schools in Seabridge."

The road, which was perfectly direct, led into a lane running at right angles. Exactly opposite was another cricket field. A small board bore the name, "ORIEL HOUSE." "My own field," he murmured, gazing over the hedge with some curiosity. Then, having a choice of ways, he hesitated. "On the road one should always keep to the left," he thought, and turned accordingly. In a few minutes he came to a farm with large, straggling outbuildings. The gates were fastened and the whole place seemed unnaturally still, and looking round, he could discover no sign of outlet or pathway on the other side. "So I was wrong," he said, with a laugh, and turning again, walked on until he came to an absolute medley of cross-roads. A sign-post, with many fingers, gave silent information.

"To CHALKLEY," he read. "No, I think I'll not try Chalkley. 'To St. AUSTIN'S.' No. Ah! where does this go?" For one path there was no pointer. He at once followed it, with a feeling of relief.

In a very short time he came to another farm. There was a rustle of animals, a sound of expectant pigs. The gate stood open. He entered.

In one of the buildings, a curiously garbed man, presenting the appearance of a half-breed, a cross between

a butcher and an amateur waterman, was stirring a thick, mealy compound, evidently unwholesome, in a decrepit tub. A collection of rusty hooks and chains, with ropes, hung from the ceiling. Innisbrook pointed to them. "What are those for?"

"Dressin' pigs."

The Earl shuddered, and turned away. From another building came the clash and rattle of tins, the swishing of tails of impatient kine.

He looked in and, for the first time, gained the experience of seeing the semi-rustic milkmaid pursuing her vocation.

He watched her for some time, with increasing admiration. The hair was certainly attractively arranged, and the red skirt was not unpleasing and had a distinctly coquettish droop. The boots, alas, were old and soiled; but this was irremediable. One cannot wear patent-leather shoes in a cow-house.

Her hands were small and well-shaped, but brown, and hardened from exposure. Her face, when he could see it, revealed more than average prettiness. The cheeks were naturally colored, but a faint flushing across the brow showed consciousness of his cool, insistent scrutiny. A little to his surprise, however, there were no signs of resentment, no indications of annoyance such as he himself would assuredly have felt and exhibited.

"A pleasing picture," he thought. "But probably she speaks abominably." In the license of his buoyancy he asked her several questions, to discover if his surmise were correct, and was agreeably surprised to find that the charm of the scene, with this little figure draped in red as its centrepiece, was broken by no harshness, no clipping of syllables or elision of essential letters, no broad offensiveness characteristic of town, as distinct from really rural, dialect.

"And all this—" pointing to the milk-pails—"when you have finished, what do you do with it?"

"We sell it—in the town."

"How?"

"It's taken round twice a day to schools and houses. We've regular customers—enough to take all the milk we can spare."

"To schools? I suppose," with a sudden light touch of curiosity, "Oriel House is not among them?"

"Oh, yes. We send to Oriel House. Mr. Grey's, isn't it?"

"Delightful, really," murmured Innisbrook.

"I shall drink the milk that she has milked—no, the milk from the cow that she has milked. My morning coffee will bring associations—or shall I forget? . . . Do you find your work monotonous?" he asked, abruptly.

"Oh, no. I like it."

"But don't you get tired? And in the long evenings—what do you do then?"

She looked at him with just the dawning of a faint wonder as to his purpose. Innisbrook was very boyish in appearance.

"I get tired sometimes, when I have been very busy," she said, simply.

"But the evenings?" he repeated, moving impatiently.

"I go to bed early."

"You are quite happy, then?"

"Oh, yes."

"They don't think," he murmured. "They cannot think. They are happy; it is simply a matter of physical health. And I—am I not here to be happy? . . . to forget?"

"Is there any short pathway to the sea front," he asked, "or must I go back by the road?"

"There's a turning a little further on. If you go through the stile, the path will lead you right to Sickert's cutting."

"Sickert's cutting?"

"Yes."

"Now, what the deuce is Sickert's cutting?" cogitated Innisbrook. "Ah, yes, of course; probably an opening through the cliffs. Thank you. Well, good-morning."

He lifted his hat courteously and passed out, to the accompanying melody of feeding, but still yearning swine.

After half an hour's walking he reached the cutting, which led directly to the beach. Turning to the left, without descending it, he found himself in a narrow path across the cliffs, taking him shortly to the Promenade—the Eastern Promenade—known and loved by many Londoners. In after days Innisbrook traversed it until the view of sea and far-extending cliffs—and, when the tide was out, of scattered rocks and chalk-strewn sand—became almost wearily familiar.

Many people were already abroad: stalwart golfers, who never made a drive, or lofted over a bunker, or wrought ingeniously with cleek and mashie; boating men, who could not tell the difference between "outrigger" and "tub," or distinguish "bow" from "stern;" hardy pedestrians, with undeveloped calves; cyclists, certainly not deficient in the same way to the uninstructed eye; and of ladies not a few.

One man, simply dressed, saluted him with deference. His face bore an expression of intense surprise. The Earl passed on without acknowledgment. "Who the deuce is this man?" he asked himself, impatiently. "I seem to half-recognize him."

He came to a slight bridge over another cutting, and, crossing it, to some covered seats. He sat down in the corner. In front of him was a long array of houses. The coast-guard station was just visible, with its whitewashed walls, odd windows and black chimneys. The Eastern Hotel, resplendent with paint, was in full view. Over the houses could be seen the tower of a large church. To the right he could catch a glimpse of the jetty, but the complete picture was broken by the trend of the cliffs. To the left he could see straight down to the sands, or far along the winding Promenade. He turned round and gazed through the glass behind. Floating spectrally on the sea was a sun-cast impression of the whole front. But the houses were transfigured, the hotel gleamed like an Italian palace, and the whole vision

seemed a picture of a dimly shining water-city.

"It is a White Venice," murmured Innisbrook. "Where are the gondoliers?"

XVI

"THAT isn't fair. You ought to let me hide in a cave or something, and then I can jump out when you are near, and Bates can find me and shoot me."

"Well, I shot you, anyhow."

"No, you didn't! How could you? You didn't aim at me."

"Yes, I did, and shot you the second time."

"I don't believe you did," doubtfully. "And, anyhow, you couldn't see me. I was hiding behind a rock. Only Bates ought to have seen me, because he knows how to scout properly, and you don't. You never can play fair. I shall start again."

"I say, Selwyn, come and be a hound. I'm the hare, and they've caught me five times. What'll you be—Juno or Roarer?"

"Let's have a peg, Piggie; you haven't been down for a month."

"This is delightful," said Verrall, as he sat in his room and listened to the fragments of clamor that rose distinctly from the tumult. After a while he stood up and looked through the window wistfully. On the curious stone erection—for some mysterious reason called the Fort—which led from the school into the playground, a few boys, regardless of decorum, were hurling tops with weird facility. Tops were really out of fashion, and only the boys unskilled in cricket, or disdainful of its charms, held aloof from the different circles round which practice balls were passing swiftly and erratically.

He went out and beckoned a very small boy.

"Welford," he demanded, sternly, "did I hear you just now actually threatening another boy? You must be careful, sir. I will not have any bullying. You may go. Anderson!"

"Sir."

"Don't prevaricate," said Verrall, solemnly. "What have you been doing?"

"I, sir?"

"Yes, *you*, sir. Give me your top, sir, at once."

"I used to be able to spin tops," he said to himself. "Have I forgotten the art?"

He twined the string round carefully and projected the top delicately downward. It fell without the semblance of a spin. He tried again, and yet again, but the top sat up and defied him.

Several boys, with amazed eagerness, pressed forward to reveal the mystery, uttering incoherent and valueless explanations. Verrall waved them back. "This is a matter for my own settlement," he murmured. "None can aid a human soul grappling with the clouds of darkness."

He pondered earnestly, analyzing the top both philosophically and rationally. At the end of five minutes he had evolved a complete science of rotation, a sequence of cause and effect. Making his preparations very deliberately, he tried again. He had conquered. The top whirled round with a classic dignity, and the sweetness of its humming was unsurpassable. He seized and launched another, and the two spun round together in eccentric circles. He watched them with the fascination of a creator.

"The late Prime Minister of England spinning tops as an aid to faith," he said, softly. "Am I doing a sublime, or a ridiculous, thing?"

"Queer little beggars, are they not?" said Grey, joining him.

"Yes," answered Verrall, absent-mindedly. "But I think I understand them now."

"More than I do, and I've spent nearly thirty years in the attempt. It's a gloriously fine morning; they ought to go out for a walk."

"Eh? Ah, yes, the very thing," said Verrall. "I'll take them."

And he did, finding not a little enjoyment in the execution of his task. The sun shone brightly, and he loved

the sun. A fair breeze was blowing, and he had not yet become weary of the pervasion of energy in the Seabridge air. The exhilaration of mere motion, which every thinking man experiences, affected him keenly; and the observation of the children furnished sufficient occupation for the brain. He noticed their light-heartedness and irresponsible gaiety at the commencement of the walk; the running to and fro of the little ones, like the inspective wanderings of immature dogs; the loquacity, the sense of freedom. Afterward he saw how their brains became tired at the suggestion of mechanical monotony in the onward progression. Their inventiveness was exhausted, and one by one they dropped into the silent line of small pedestrians, their legs physically untired, showing gradually the depression of the mind. He soon turned.

One boy, on the homeward march, made timid efforts to engage him in conversation.

"That field belongs to Mr. Vardell."

"The large one?"

"Yes; it's an extenuation of his farm."

Innisbrook laughed joyously. Today everything possessed a charm for him. "It is good to be with children," he meditated. The acquired prejudices of artificiality were thawing rapidly in the warmth of their pure naturalness.

In the evening he was strangely moved when he looked into the long dormitories and saw the lines of white-covered cots, and the tiny heads resting in so many different ways on tumbled pillows. The breathing of sleeping children was a sound new to his manhood, and awakened emotions that seemed to him as the most beautiful of which the human heart is capable. "They are in my charge," he thought, and experienced a new sense of direct and personal responsibility for every one of these helpless little ones. The humility of a man who has ties and interests beyond the circumscription of his own personality came over him—diffidence, hesitancy, modified

by the birth of a subdued self-reliance. He felt better, happier, infinitely wiser, as he moved slowly away.

"Gale was partly right," he murmured. "We want something to do. But we want more—something, someone, to look after."

In his own room, he wrote a letter.

MY DEAR RAYMOND:

Just a few lines complementary to our conversation.

The power of attorney which I signed on my way through town will have been already delivered to you by Messrs. Graylings. I desire you to act upon it completely.

My address you will divulge to no one, and you will forward to me no letters or communications, whatever circumstances may arise. My instructions are to be followed implicitly. I have formed my decision after long deliberation, and have considered every possibility. My orders are final. I must not be disturbed in any way. Till you hear from me, you know absolutely nothing of

Yours, very truly,

INNISBROOK.

When he had sealed the letter, he sat quietly, smoking. It was disconcerting, after the events of the day, that he should see through the smoke clouds two figures—one, draped in red, subtly suggesting the other.

XVII

PROFESSOR DORRIS was a visitor.

"It is a matter of business, not of sentiment," he said, decidedly.

"Exactly," said Verrall. "From the point of view which you advocate, Art is to be Art no longer; the beautiful is to be disregarded and shut out from our lives; romance is to be stripped of all alluring vesture, and to stand forth in her nakedness as a silly fable or bare, unattractive incident; every object of reverence or of sympathy hallowed by tradition or consecrated by affection is to be mercilessly shattered. To be touched with loveliness is to be tainted with disgrace. Our wills and desires must be bowed to harness; our souls trained to business habits. An admirable policy."

"Why," said Dorris, who had not been attending, "why, for instance, should we pay millions annually to support a monarchy?"

"Do we really pay millions?" cried Miss Barr. "Disgraceful!"

"Yes," said Dorris, cordially; "millions for a figure-head that we don't want."

"That *you* don't want," Grey interposed.

"A republic would be better, doubtless," said Verrall. "There is more stability, simplicity, purity."

"A republic is the natural form of government."

"No," corrected Grey. "Nature teaches despotism—paternal despotism."

"Exactly," said Verrall. "A benevolent autocracy is natural and satisfactory. It is the charm of a free country like England that we can sometimes approach very closely to this ideal."

"England is supposed to be a free country," said Dorris, warmly. "But despotism, you say, is quite possible. Lord Innisbrook, for example, held an absolute dictatorship during his years of office. In a republic it would be impossible for such a man—shallow, insincere, cynical—to attain supreme power."

"Just so," said Verrall, thoughtfully.

"Passing from the State to the State Church," Dorris resumed, "on what grounds can you base a defense of the arbitrary monopolizing by one sect of the churches built for the whole nation?"

"I don't defend anything," said Verrall.

"Were they really built for the whole nation?" cried Miss Barr. "It is indeed disgraceful."

"The majority were built when the whole of England professed one faith. They were built for the people, and belong to all equally. Now that we are divided, we cannot all use them together; but we still retain our right, which has been usurped by one section. Every religious body should be able to use them, and the only

feasible way of arranging this is to take turns."

"It would be distinctly edifying to have the Salvation Army beating drums in St. Paul's," said Grey. "And the next week the Amalgamated Atheists might hold a smoking-concert, as the most suitable mode of worship. And the nine hundred and ninety-nine small sects could frolic about in turn. Your suggestion is a brilliant one, Dorris."

"You may laugh," said the Professor; "but it is founded on the principle of right—a principle, of course, ignored by the clergy of the Established Church, noted, as they always have been, for their tenacious grasp of every privilege in the way of endowment, and so forth. Most charitable corporations are compelled to look keenly after their endowments."

"Yes," said Dorris, heatedly; "but they are really used for charitable purposes. The endowments of the Church were given for a specific object; but the clergy, though they forgot the principle of the Tripartite Division, did not forget the principle of covetousness. It is scarcely credible, but at one time they held three-fourths of the land of England."

"Really?" said Verrall.

"Disgraceful!" cried Miss Barr.

"They would probably have got the whole of the kingdom into their hands had they not been checked by the Statute of Mortmain, passed in the middle of the fourteenth century."

"In 1279," said Verrall.

"A matter of detail," said the Professor, impatiently. "It makes no difference."

"Pardon me. Accuracy, even in details, always makes a slight difference."

"Mr. Dorris, do you think the voluntary schools—that is to say, the Church schools—"

"Nothing of the kind," said Grey. "The term includes all primary schools not aided by local rates."

"—should be specially assisted by the State?" continued Miss Barr, calmly.

"Religion," replied the Professor, "is without the province of the State, which should have nothing to do with it, and, consequently, should prohibit religious instruction in State schools. Any denominational school supported by the State becomes a State school, and all religious training should cease."

"I am pleased to hear you say that. It seems so sad for the State to pay for spreading error. It is horrible to think that even Romish schools might receive help."

"Better make a boy a Roman Catholic than give him no religious training at all," said Grey.

"You have not studied the question," said Miss Barr, sweetly.

"I think we are talking great nonsense. Look, the sun is coming out. We shall have a fine day, after all. The glaring sun, like a penny bun—ha! ha!"

Verrall writhed in his chair. "I am getting tired of this," he thought, wearily.

Yes, he was tired; tired of Grey, with his curious compound of commonsense and irritating idiocy; of Miss Barr, with her perpetual obtrusion into matters that she was incapable of understanding; of the occasional visitors—like this Dorris—with their shallow self-sufficiency; of the whole atmosphere, instinct with the monotony and bigotry characteristic of lives confined within narrow limits.

His nerves, strained by repeated annoyance to acute tension, throbbed with a vague sense of disappointment. Yet a term ago he had been comparatively happy.

XVIII

THE gray pile loomed dimly through the blackness, and the worn tombstones, half-seen and half-imagined, rose suddenly in newly revealed places. The ghosts of dead vanities whispered in the churchyard as the wind swept through the dank grass.

The bell had not begun to ring. He was early, and when he twisted

round the iron ring and opened the door quietly, he found the church in utter darkness. The verger still lingered over his tea, and the organ blower was playing with his children in the cottage sixty yards away.

He found his way to his usual pew and sat down. There was a sense of peacefulness in the old deserted church. The still vastness seemed to absorb all individuality, all self-consciousness, and convey indefinitely a present promise of relief. The worries, irritations, littlenesses of the troubled outerness had no power to penetrate and disturb this solemn restfulness. Shadows only moved to and fro, passing from window to window, from pillar to pillar, touching the brasses and lectern, and rising till they were lost among the oak rafters.

The church stood in the low part of the town—the unfashionable, uncleanly, ancient part. This had once been the whole parish, but time had brought extension, and the remnants of the old village had become gradually the slums of the new town. Verrall often passed through its narrow, winding streets to seek the solitude of the church. Sometimes he stayed to evensong, and found comfort in the simple service; more often he lingered only till the doors were opened and the heavy-footed verger, taper in hand, passed by him. But he went out always with the knowledge that he was strengthened in some way by his brief sojourn. He could not compass the repose of unquestioning faith, though he tried with earnestness. No vibrations of grace touched with quiet ecstasy the lonely figure waiting and hoping in the stillness. It was merely that the dull, aching pain at his heart was assuaged for a time. He sometimes stayed, as has been said, to the ordinary mid-week services, but he did not care for the matins and evensong on the Sunday. Without clearly and coherently realizing why, he felt that they were oppressive, irksome, "official," and, in consequence, he rarely went. There was in the afternoon, however, a children's service, to

which he took a few of the younger boys. It was a curious service, intended chiefly for the children of the church schools. Just before half-past three the little ones filed in, the boys through the south door, the girls through the north. In the side pews were usually parishioners and visitors, guarded by their children.

Verrall gradually became fond of the service, and the weariness that seemed the inevitable climax of all his desires, longings and endeavors, in this case was delayed. The liking endured for so long that it seemed destined to be permanent. The reaction eventually came, and he yielded completely to the revulsion of feeling; but in the meantime, he attended constantly, and for a time the service became a definite, integral part of his life. He experienced a sad interest in examining, without detail, the faces of the little ones, who represented every varying stage, from acute poverty to fair competence. But the majority revealed a dull brutishness, an untrained wildness, that mutely satirized the triumphs of civilization. He learned to understand, and to appreciate at its true value, the quiet perseverance that wrought so steadfastly in the endeavor to convey to these embryonic intelligences the simple essentials of rational life. Instead of giving them a creed of blind negation, varied with traces of instinctive superstition, as the voice of modern progress demands, a few definite formulæ were "driven home;" formulæ that would be forgotten, probably, in the excessive vigor or weakness of maturity, but that would recur to consciousness with deep meaning in the time of need or trouble; formulæ enabling them to find the great unknown quantity.

As week succeeded week, he became aware of a fair-haired, gray-eyed girl who came always to the service with a little boy, round-faced, blue-eyed, doll-like. He could not distinctly remember any one occasion as the first on which he had seen her; she seemed to glide into his existence by virtue of passing constantly before

him. He could not determine decidedly when he began to look for her appearance, and to watch her; yet he found himself doing these things as one performs the functions of familiar routine.

He saw her occasionally on the Promenade or in the streets. Sometimes he met the child in the early morning, surrounded and guided by a throng of small sisters, for he went to a *very* preparatory school; or would see him returning in the afternoon, with incongruous immensity of wooden hoop or large ball. He never passed without patting the little head, surmounted by tiny cap and tossing curls, and would give him, surreptitiously, chocolates and unwholesome sweetmeats, purchased with careful revision. But the boy recalled the girl, whose face seemed to appeal to him, for it had in truth a faintly appealing expression that had much to do with the attractiveness. There was an utterly girlish softness in the curve of the little lips.

He learned—he did not quite know how—her name and where she lived. He did not remember asking or making inquiries. He simply knew. And one night, as he was walking along the front, he passed the house. The Venetian blinds were drawn down, but not properly turned, and his casual glance pierced through into the room. She was sitting in a chair reading; lamps were on the table, and in the subdued light she looked very charming. Later, when he sat in his room, smoking, his thoughts wandered idly to the apparition, and the face appeared to have acquired a new power of haunting him. The dull pain that was now perpetually at his heart became for the moment perceptibly more acute, and on each occasion that he afterward met her the condition recurred. Yet, to his own surprise, he always looked forward eagerly to the next possibility of seeing her. It was not that he had any special feeling for her in her own individuality. She was simply able to arouse emotions that he had tried to check, to recall what he had been at-

tempting to forget; but the will to endure was becoming very feeble as the aching sense of unrest increased. It was odd that the church which had so often relieved him should have introduced him to a personality that excited fiercely his revived craving.

All the pews were free in the afternoon, and though he generally managed to retain his own, he was sometimes compelled to stow away his boys and himself in any odd sittings that were vacant. It became a habit with him to look round carefully on these occasions and endeavor to secure seats behind the gray-eyed girl. Her hat was a familiar beacon, and her fur-trimmed jacket was pleasant to gaze upon; the thick, soft border round the neck was the one thing that could form a perfect setting for the daintiness of the face. And he liked to have this living picture in front of him, to watch the lines and curves, and, perhaps, to dream. He knew that she realized dimly the peculiar regard of which she was the object, and that she in her turn was shyly curious. The child was a link between them. And Verrall, who was still young, looked infinitely younger and not unpicturesque.

One afternoon the girl was absent when he arrived. He was unduly affected by the trifling disappointment. Then he noticed he was unusually early, and was comforted by the thought that she still might come. He had a pew to himself; his boys were all directly in front. He waited impatiently. The places were gradually filled up, and the children trooped in, in the irresponsible way that had at first annoyed him, but that he now understood. He watched them idly. She had not come. The ringers ceased; there was a sudden hush as all knelt down for the first prayer. When they rose, and the hymn had been given out, she came in and passed him, the boy, who always looked for him, smiling in recognition. She went to the end, and came back slowly. The church was crowded. There was just room in his pew, and she stopped undecidedly; he rose to

make way, and she entered, with a prettily flushed face.

There was so little space to spare that her dress touched him the whole time. Occasionally her shoulder just brushed his arm. He was amazed by his sensations, mystified. He did not yet understand. When they knelt they were so close that her breath fanned his cheek. He might have increased the distance; he decreased it. His heart was beating irregularly, but his face was almost colorless, and his blood seemed quite cool. He remembered a time when it had danced within him, and he felt a sense of utter desolation.

One of the hymns was Newman's "Lead, Kindly Light." It was the hymn—perhaps the only one—that always moved him profoundly. "What is the matter with me?" he thought, wonderingly.

It had become dark; clouds were covering the sky. In a few minutes lights would be needed. They knelt again.

Her head, resting on the rim of the pew front, almost touched his cheek; he inclined his head slowly till the contact was completed. Rain began to patter on the windows.

Moved by a swift, unrestrainable impulse, he imprisoned her hand in his own. Surprised, and scarcely understanding the intention, she made a faint effort to withdraw it. His head was leaning forward; he bent down suddenly till his lips touched the hand, which he retained for a moment afterward. As he comprehended what he had done, he released it hastily and averted his eyes. He did not need to fear. Her face was covered now by both her hands.

"What have I done?" he thought. And then, "What can I do?" for the sense of desolation again swept over him, and he was appalled.

XIX

"THE king laughed, yet in two minutes he was dead."

The sun was up, with wealth of

gold; the keen air throbbed with a sense of illimitable freshness; the sky was greatly blue, with a vivid color that seemed misplaced, contravening the unities.

He looked at her curiously as he took a seat next to his usual one in the corner, which she now occupied. She murmured the words again: "The king laughed, yet in two minutes he was dead." She appeared unconscious of his presence, and he took advantage of her preoccupation to make a careful survey of her face and figure, at the same time appealing vainly to his historical knowledge for a clue to any possible meaning in her words. Suddenly she turned, surprising him in the midst of his investigation. She smiled slightly. He raised his hat.

"A beautiful morning," tentatively. "Yes. And you are late. Why?"

"Late?"

"Very late; and you see the result—you have lost your seat."

"And gained—" A wave of the hand completed his thought. "You speak as if you were acquainted with my habits," he added.

"Pray don't think that I have been studying you with impertinent interest. I have watched you, casually, and stray shadows of some of your ideas appeared to coincide with the reflections of mine. That is all. The perception seemed to constitute a link—in degree, of course."

"You mean—?"

"You are fond of dreaming."

"Really?"

"But is it not so?"

"Well, perhaps, yes."

"I live in dreams."

She was silent for so long that he became restless. "You said that I had forfeited my seat through negligence. How is it that you know my usual resting place?"

"You have often deprived me of it."

"I am veritably sorry. But . . . I have not seen you passing."

"I do not come out when it is occupied."

"How can you judge?"

"I see from the window." She pointed toward the hotel.

"You are staying there?"

"Yes."

"Since—?"

"You wish you had seen me before?" Her frankness was peculiar, free from archness, yet bewitching.

"I was wondering how much I have unwittingly suffered," he said, thoughtfully. "I hope you have not been here long?"

"So that I may, presumably, have longer to stay?" she asked, smiling.

"Exactly."

"I don't know how long I shall stay—or how soon I may go. I have been here for a week, I think. But I am not sure. I forgot."

He raised his eyebrows inquiringly.

"I forgot many things," she murmured; "but not . . . quite all."

"Why do you come here?" he asked, after a pause. "I don't mean to the town, but here."

"Why do you?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"I know," she said, softly; "I have watched you. See! . . . the White Venice, the City Wonderful." She turned round and pointed, through the glass partition, to where, far out at sea, the sun threw up its transfiguration of the houses on the front; houses that took shapes as of mediæval palaces, quaint and very weird, resting silently on the great waters.

He was startled. "You have found it out?"

"Apparently."

"I thought it was my own discovery—the capital of an unexplored dream-country."

"What name did you give it?" she asked, eagerly.

"Could there be doubt?"

"I was right," she smiled. "I thought so. I hoped so. The White Venice . . . how solemn it is . . . no life, no gondolas. So quiet!" She looked at him wistfully.

"When you gaze at your city," she said, after a while, "what do you think of?—how do you feel?"

"Sometimes like an ineffable prig,

if I may use the word; sometimes like a king, in very truth."

"The king laughed, yet in two minutes he was dead." The words seemed to escape from her unconsciously.

"Of what monarch do you speak?" he asked, curiously.

"Who knows?" Her eyes rested on his face with an air of dreamy abstraction.

"Who are you?" he demanded, brusquely.

"I am the Incomparable Princess," she said, simply. Then, with a rapid change of expression: "Behold my only remaining city!" She pointed outward.

"I am sadly perplexed—that is, I am perplexed, and I am sad through stress of sympathy."

"Say, rather, that you are curious."

"Is curiosity a crime?"

"In some people, yes; in you, no. Do you understand loneliness?" she asked, suddenly, breaking a brief silence, "—the loneliness of the present time, that comes to men and women who live in the whirl of the world; the most—the most *damnable* loneliness of all ages?"

She said it so naturally, and with a vehemence so graceful, that the word in no way jarred. It seemed the only one to express capably the essence of her thought with delicacy.

"I think so. . . . I fear so."

"The tide is out," she said, abruptly. "Let us walk on the sands."

"And leave our Wonderful City?"

"We will return to it." She rose.

He looked inquiringly at the hotel.

"There are no spies," she said, laughing. "He—they are not as we are. They do not love the 'Morning Star.'"

He offered his arm, silently, and they passed down the steps and through the cutting; then sauntered slowly under the shelter of the cliff.

"You said 'he' before 'they.' Who is this 'he'?"

"You are very human," she answered, half-gravely, half with light scorn. "He is—ah, who is he, in-

deed? . . . He trifles with me, sometimes," she went on, "but the other times he gives to his books. His books! . . . Am not I the fairest book in Europe? . . . and he will not read me—"

"There is one who would gladly do so."

"Professionally?"

"Damnation, no! I beg your pardon. . . . What does she mean?" he muttered, in reflection.

"You may have the second volume," wistfully.

"And the first?"

"It is lying on his book-shelf."

"Why not—?"

"It is impossible. I cannot take it away."

"And the third, then?" he persisted.

"The third! God help the man who takes the third!" she cried, wildly.

"Forgive me."

"Forgive me," she said, bravely, though her hand trembled. She pointed to the distant water. "The waves are very wonderful; always moving, most often turbulent, swayed even in apparent quiescence by undercurrents, and, after relative calm, the inevitable storm."

"Your mood to-day leads you to picture emotions of sadness."

"Do you believe in God?" she asked, inconsequently.

"I fancy so, at times. All human beings create their own Deity, working upon their conception of the ideal model."

"To believe in God—to believe as a little child—is it not a—?"

"Perhaps," he interrupted, wearily; "but why talk of rest in the midst of unrest?"

"In each whirlpool there is a point that never moves. The mathematical centre of the earth is stationary. We must pass through the vortex to attain the point of rest; and the centre of the earth is, theoretically, stationary. We cannot find it in actuality."

As they parted he said:

"I shall see you to-morrow?"

She bent her head. "Till to-morrow, good-bye." She left him at the

words, with a lingering pressure of the hand.

"Every pretty face seems to madden me," he murmured, bitterly. "Of what am I made? Am I different from other men?"

He waited and watched through long successions of unkind days, but the Incomparable Princess had vanished.

"The Fates are against me," he thought. "They will not let me forget."

The lesser craving excited the greater. He wanted something. He was worried. For one cannot lose the Incomparable Princess without annoyance, or even sorrow, regret, melancholy and heart discrepancies. And Verrall had twice lost her.

"Providence would better hurry up," he reflected, grimly, at night.

"It is Providence or Gale," he muttered in the morning. "About four to one on the latter."

Every member is, therefore, of distinct importance, and gets his chance."

"I see. And there is a further advantage, I suppose. An Opposition is unrestricted in choice of ways and means; the light skirmishing, which is its function, admits of a charmingly airy indefiniteness. It is not pinned down to a practicable policy."

"Innisbrook's withdrawal was a terrible blow to the party," said Sir Francis. "Fennell and Hughes, and so on, are all very well in their way, but not one of them is just *the* man, and the country felt it. We were bound to go."

"And we have gone, bag and baggage," said Gale. "We can hardly call it a defeat; even 'rout' is too weak a word; really, 'annihilation' almost describes the event."

"I believe Innisbrook could retrieve the position, annihilation notwithstanding," said Lucas.

"He could do anything," Sir Francis declared.

"A wonderful man," Landor assented. "But where is he, eh?"

"I wish I knew," said Gale.

"Doesn't anybody know?" asked Lucas.

"He has buried himself completely. We haven't had a line from him. No one has, so far as I can discover."

"My man Betts swears that he saw him more than a year ago at a little seaside place in Sussex—I forget the name; passed him on the promenade, and almost touched him."

"A mistake, probably. I imagine he is out of England."

"Shooting elephants in Africa, perhaps."

"How long is it since he vanished?"

"About fifteen months."

"Just fifteen," said Gale.

"And not a sign? He is a remarkable man."

"I wonder when we shall see him again?" said Gale, slowly.

"Now, by gad!" cried Sir Francis. "Here he is!"

They all turned round; there was Innisbrook, strolling in in the old way, as if he had parted from them twenty-four hours ago.

XX

"So you delivered your maiden speech to-day, Landor? How did you like it?"

"I didn't mind."

"How did the House like it?" put in Gale, with a smile.

"Oh, they didn't mind at all," said Landor, good-humoredly.

"Was it a full House?" Sir Francis asked.

"Yes. I spoke just after dinner."

"A good time, I should think," said Lucas, thoughtfully.

"Yes. They could not go away—they were waiting to hear Fennell."

"Is it an advantage, or a disadvantage, to gain one's first experiences of Parliamentary life from the Opposition benches?" said Gale.

"An advantage, I think, if you are opposed to a sufficiently large majority. You see, if the rank and file on the Government side talk much, they may hinder the progress of business. But the Opposition has to husband its resources if it wishes to organize and maintain an effective criticism.

"Well!" exclaimed Sir Francis.

"Please don't," said the Earl, plaintively. "How do, everybody? I thought I would just drop in and look at you. All together, I see. Quite like old times."

"Seen Grace?" Sir Francis asked, grimly. "Egad! she will give you a fine wigging, my Lord."

The Earl shrugged his shoulders. "I have only just reached town. I came straight here. Could I do more?"

The baronet grunted.

"Just so," said Innisbrook, pleasantly. "Well, how are things going on?—your election, for instance, Landor? Has it come off yet, or are you still looking forward?"

"Eh?" said the millionaire.

"You were expecting a speedy vacancy, by-election, and so on. Were you returned—or has the vacancy not arisen, after all?"

They stared at him in amazement.

"But—" Landor began.

"But where—?" said Lucas.

"Don't you know—?" cried Sir Francis.

"Have you not heard about the general election?" Gale demanded.

"I have heard about nothing," said the Earl. "I have not read any papers, or listened to what people were saying. You see, for a time I took no interest in politics."

Gale watched him narrowly.

"I shall want coaching," said the Earl, smiling.

"Well, how is Lady Landor?" he added, turning to the philanthropist.

"And you don't know," said Gale, in a loud voice, "that your party, my Lord, has been utterly broken up, smashed, crushed, withered, paralyzed? Well, I *am*—really, you *must* tell me where you have been buried." He took the Earl's arm and playfully drew him to one side.

"What is it?" Innisbrook demanded.

"Where *have* you been?" said Gale, lowering his voice.

"Why?"

"I think you should have seen your sister first—obligation of natural duty, you know. Besides, she would

have given you the heads of all the important news. You will go blundering about most comically, Innisbrook. Really, the whole thing is very amusing." He began to laugh.

"What is it?" the Earl repeated, quietly.

"I want to educate you up to date."

"Well, begin."

"You said—"

"Begin. I wait anxiously."

"Damn!" murmured Gale. "I don't quite know where to start," he said, gravely. "You would better ask all the questions you wish to. That will help us a little."

"I will begin," said the Earl. "We were defeated?"

"Yes."

"Majority?"

"One hundred and ninety."

"Ah!" said Innisbrook.

"Next!"

"Foreign affairs?"

"No complications."

"Good. Any new men?"

"None of importance."

"Anyone dead?"

"Durnhaven, Cliffield, Sandringham."

"Landor been conspicuous lately?"

"Gave fifty thousand last week to St. Ronan's."

"Church?"

"Hospital."

"He is in the House, of course?"

"Yes."

"Ah! And Lady Landor?"

"She is with the child," said Gale.

"The child?"

"It was born six months ago." He watched the Earl's face earnestly.

"Ah!" He walked on. "She is fond of it?"

"It is dead."

"I beg your pardon. You were saying—?"

"It is dead."

"Ah!" he stopped suddenly, collected himself, and went on. "And the mother?"

"She died in childbirth," Gale answered, quietly.

"Really?" murmured Innisbrook.

"How *very* deplorable." His hand shook. He looked round vacantly.

"We still come as we used to do. We have got into the way. As you said, it reminds us of old times."

"Old times?" He stretched out his arms. "Oh, Dorothy," he murmured.

"You were not the only one," said Gale, gently.

"The only one?"

"To suffer."

"Did *she* suffer?"

"A little. It was soon over."

"Soon over!" repeated the Earl.

"Ah, yes, exactly. Did *he* feel it?" he asked, abruptly.

"We all felt it. We all loved her."

"*You* may have done so; you were able to. But the others, they are cold-blooded. How could they? They *cannot* feel."

"I don't know," said Gale, stroking his mustache.

"Ah, well," said the Earl, "we would better get back. Thanks for your kindness."

"I have wasted the last six months," he added, thoughtfully, as they turned round.

"How?"

"In trying to find out."

"To find out what?"

"What I should have known," said the Earl, laughing.



WHEN WOFFINGTON SOLD WATERCRESS

WHEN Woffington sold watercress,
Crying her warings up and down
The narrow streets of Dublin town,
I wonder did no passer guess
The spirit in the dingy dress,
The heart beneath the tattered gown?

Did not the eyes' audacious brown
Speak *Harry Wildair's* recklessness—
Whispered no prescience of renown
When Woffington sold watercress?

Nay, blind we are as in those days
The folk of Dublin who went by;
This hour, it may be, you and I
Have passed upon our several ways
The little lass whom future praise
Will hail as some divinity.

To-morrow and we swell the cry;
To-day we pass, nor pause nor gaze;
They stayed you, Peggy, but to buy,
And blind we are as in those days.

*Child, is it you will wear the bays,
You who will win the world's caress?
Nay, blind we are as in those days
When Woffington sold watercress.*

THEODOSIA GARRISON.

AN ACCOMMODATING HUSBAND

“PAUL,” said Mrs. Pondermore, as they rose from dinner, breaking the silence that had prevailed throughout the meal, “do you know that we were married just five years ago to-day?”

“If I’d been there it would never have happened,” observed Mr. Pondermore, who is rather absent-minded, pursuing his train of thought aloud. “Er—excuse me, my dear, you were saying——?”

“That this is the fifth anniversary of our wedding,” replied Mrs. Pondermore, who is used to her husband’s thinking out loud; “and it has set me to contrasting the two times. Paul, do you know that you never kiss me mornings and evenings as you used to?”

“Er—certainly not. I don’t think it a sensible move at all; it might put us in a very ridiculous light if it became public,” murmured Mr. Pondermore. “I beg your pardon, my dear, I’m afraid I was slightly inattentive—that U. B. D. and D. deal is worrying me somewhat—what was it you said?”

“That you neglect to kiss me as you used to when we were first married,” said Mrs. Pondermore, patiently. “I know it isn’t because you don’t love me any more, Paul, but—but don’t you think you could remember to?” she asked, wistfully.

Mr. Pondermore contracted his brows tightly in an honest effort to corral his errant thoughts and fix them upon what his wife was saying.

“Er—yes, my dear,” he said; “what is it I have neglected?”

“You don’t kiss me as often as you used to, Paul,” repeated his wife, softly.

“Don’t I, my darling?” cried Mr. Pondermore, all contrition. “It’s this wretched business that engrosses me so; but if you’ll forgive me, sweetest, I’ll never forget it again. Never. Er—that is,” he added, the absent look creeping back into his eyes, “just make a note of it, will you? and I’ll have one of the clerks attend to it the first thing in the morning.”

ALEX. RICKETTS.



A DULL-WITTED WIT

“LOOK here, Hooks!” said the comedian of the dramatic aggregation, addressing the manager thereof, “when I joined this company I wanted \$50 a week, and you said I’d have to split my figures and be content with half that amount. Now, where’s my half?”

“Huh!” was the reply. “The half that you split off is yours. The one you don’t get is the one you are getting. The other half is mine, of course. For a comedian, you are mighty slow to see the point, Gagsmith!”



IN DOUBT

“SHE says she can’t afford to keep two drags since she got married.” “What is she going to do—sell one, or get a divorce from the other?”

THE CHARGE OF THE FOUR HUNDRED

A JUVENALIAN SATIRE

By Momus, Jr.

Quicquid agunt homines nostri farrago libelli.—Juvenal

SOCIETY'S a funny thing:
One it will kiss, another sting.
It's just what Byron once declared—
Opinion now quite largely shared
By people of experience,
Or those who've cultivated sense;
Or who have satiated grown
And in disgust the truth will own—
He called Society a horde
Made up of bores and people bored.

There was a vain old negro king
Thought nature but a blundering thing;
An artist traveling in his land
He asked to paint him tall and grand
And white! In lands that civilize
Most men their natural hue despise;
Some other color they would choose
Than that which nature likes to use.
'Twas Aristotle, mankind's friend,
Said men do nothing but pretend;

That moral virtues on this earth
Are theirs by training, not by birth;
Great Brutus said about the same:
"I find thee, Virtue, but a name!"
Both of these gentlemen forgot
That men are a peculiar lot;
That habits formed are those that please,
And are acquired with greatest ease;
That vices, when delectable,
Become at once respectable.

It is not worth that makes the man;
It's Wealth—deny it they who can!
'Tis love for its alchemic ray
That leads Society astray.
It can't afford to snub a man
Built on the million-dollar plan!
It only waits until it learns
What you have not, before it spurns.
No wretch, if he has wealth galore,
Is kept long waiting at its door.

THE SMART SET

'Tis Wealth that makes Society;
 Of gold is made the magic key.
 But if you're poor, the gates are locked;
 The road to eminence is blocked;
 The virtues all have flown away;
 Vice has its zenith here to-day.
 And if we look, we're sure to find
 That all Society's mankind
 Has moved its ears down to its feet;
 There, Brain for favor must entreat!

It's Wealth that gilds and burnishes;
 It's Wealth that scandal furnishes;
 It's Wealth that causes all our woes;
 It buys us friends and buys us foes.
 We pay a fee when we are born,
 And when from earthly life we're torn,
 When freed from wearing care and toil,
 We pay for just six feet of soil
 In which to lay in peace away
 The still, cold form of crumbling clay.

Crime walks with Riches in the street,
 And all whom they may chance to meet—
 Fair maids in costly gowns and furs,
 Each wishing all you have were hers;
 And women, weary grown and old,
 Who know their world is harsh and cold;
 Stern men who outwardly condemn—
 On courtier's knees bow low to them!
 Not one will dare to snub a man
 Built on the million-dollar plan.

Then yours, O Riches, be the field!
 For to you all the virtues yield.
 When men despair your smiles to win
 They call you, goddess, "root of sin;"
 Yet if you but a glance bestow,
 How quickly all their maxims go!
 'Twas envy of your power alone
 That seated Virtue on a throne,
 Where she is viciously abused,
 And where her sceptre lies unused!

Vice laughs at Virtue in distress
 And battens on her own success.
 How often are impostors prized
 And men of worth and brain despised!
 The heavy taxes Virtue pays
 Are merely for the outward gaze,
 For Riches, with a scornful smile,
 Make Vice a virtue; Virtue, vile;
 Gold is the king, and men bow low—
 Society decrees it so!

When Fortune pipes her tuneful song
 Man dances well and sometimes long;
 He knows full well the charge is true
 That all the world will value you
 At your own rating. The old saw
 From ancient Persian social law—
 That if you laugh, its censure sleeps,
 But it awakes for him who weeps—
 Still holds. Financial bankruptcy
 Is never in Society.

While seers experience deride
 In vainly trying to decide
 If Wealth or Virtue be man's aim,
 Do you all controversy lame
 By gaining both, if both you can;
 But 'tis the surer, wiser plan
 To get Wealth first. Be not afraid—
 Society's an easy jade.
 Kneel at her feet—that is her tax—
 And you will always find her lax.

And as for boasted pedigree,
 Or birth superiority,
 There's no such thing! In every age
 All history has but one long page;
 Men rise by others' woes and pains,
 And fall by others' strength and gains.
 A king to-day may come again
 One of the most plebeian men;
 For Nature's laws act and react;
 Reincarnation is a fact.

There's England! All her families old
 Bought pedigree with stolen gold;
 Her Marlboroughs and Churchills fine
 Come through a most plebeian line,
 And yet as good as England knows—
 Or so her ancient history shows.
 Poor Arabella's dead and gone;
 Her flesh the worms have fed upon!
 She, James, and all her paramours
 Long since have crossed the unknown shores.

'Twould take forever and a day
 To wash their ugly sins away;
 But let them and their vices sleep;
 Here's hoping they are buried deep.
 Just read De Foe's "True Englishman!"
 And read it well; then, if you can,
 Tell me that honest old De Foe
 Was wrong! But you must prove it so,
 And not assert, assuming that
 I've no more sense than's in your hat.

Would England boast of ancestry,
 Then ancient records burned should be!
 The Guelphs, though now they own a throne,
 Were once as wild marauders known.
 "Your money or your life!" they said,
 And all the bandit gang they led;
 They fought for plunder, and they won,
 And thus arose that royal sun!
 It was not worth nor ancestry
 That made a Guelph "Her Majesty!"

Decadent nations always brag,
 And from the grave ancestors drag
 To prove their claims. Poor, shallow fools,
 To make the helpless dead their tools!
 And he whose family was poor,
 Who peddled skins from door to door,
 Who by economy—called brain—
 Great riches managed to obtain
 Left heirs who boast a family tree
 With golden-branching pedigree!

Oh, Wealth! You swift-transforming thing!
 You God of serf, of priest, of king!
 You All in All! What other God
 Wields half so strong and fierce a rod?
 Men anything will do and dare
 If they're protected by your glare!
 They know Opinion's lips are sealed
 If they're financially well-heeled;
 They've learned the nineteenth-century trick—
 That crime's not crime if gilded thick!

Society—the funny thing!—
 Claims a most brilliant following!
 It talks of intellect and brain—
 For neither one it cares a grain!
 It cultivates the Kipling fad!
 Those trivial rhymes are "Great! Egad!"
 It never raves o'er Edison,
 For science is a medicine
 Which, if by accident they'd drink,
 Might make the fragile darlings think!

And who prefers the "flow of soul"
 To pleasures of the "flowing bowl?"
 The only varnish that conceals
 The ravages that Time reveals
 Is Riches, the great primal cause
 Of misery and broken laws.
 And none can tell if Virtue'll yield
 Till Riches first have had the field.
 Was ever heart too hard and cold
 To thaw beneath the beams of gold?

If but Wealth's wondrous gift were mine,
 In all things worldly should I shine!
 I should not have to seek the stage
 In order to become the rage;
 A prince might at my doors await!
 A title link to mine his fate!
 All blemishes of mind and face
 To "Odd—but charming!" would give place.
 If clever now, then I should be
 A marvel of the century!

Society's a funny thing:
 One it will kiss, another sting;
 So 'tis not strange that women who
 Give Gossip heavy work to do
 Divorce their husbands, drink high balls,
 And take a dozen leaps and falls;
 Who, in a nutshell, go the pace,
 May yet retain their leader's place.
 They demonstrate their own decrees
 To do exactly what they please.

Their friends and relatives endure;
 Their children marry—they're secure!
 The world looks on and laughs! Alas,
 Write down Society an ass!
 If Mrs. Benny Bensonlake
 Her bonds of marriage dares to break,
 Her spouse, dishonored, doesn't slay,
 But has revenge another way,
 By making Number Two agree
 To marry; ah, what cruelty!

And some who stand against divorce
 Adopt a most suggestive course!
 Their ancestors were women who,
 While claiming blood of royal blue,
 Ne'er gave the law a decent chance
 To mend the rents their ragtime dance
 Made in the moral code's fiat—
 What mattered little things like that?
 They did not need the law's consent
 When "Majesty" its presence lent!

Those ancestors were rather proud
 To hobnob with the motley crowd—
 The Portsmouths, Marlboroughs and Gwynnes—
 And boldly advertise their sins;
 But when they grew too old for mirth
 They wanted to reform the earth!
 Some married as a last resort—
 Or so historic pens report.
 (But nowadays our swells arrange
 A sort of New York Stock Exchange!)

To doubt this if you are inclined,
 Then history will change your mind;
 Yet wait! It may be you delight
 In doing things that are not right!
 If so, these acts of kings and queens
 Become your most convenient screens;
 Therefore, their conduct you'll approve
 Yet 'tis a most unskilful move
 For Mrs. Trader to object
 And say she never can respect

Her who resents impurity
 And asks the law to set her free.
 What! Her white hands a sinner touch?
 The lady doth protest too much!
 Her stock of virtue is assessed;
 A fault condoned is one confessed.
 She does not want Society
 To search her family history!
 But freedom's such a precious thing
 That everyone must have a fling.

So, while she looks on divorcées
 With scorn, or may avert her gaze,
 Some members of her family,
 In Western towns or over sea,
 Have "escorts" or a "family friend,"
 And most unblushingly contend
 That woman's rights shall equal be
 To man's in—high Society!
 She sets herself a useless task!
 For, though Opinion wears a mask,

The world, while by it always ruled,
 Is not so easily befooled;
 It hears, although it still condones,
 The rattling of the family bones.
 One woman a divorce will get,
 And, while the "document" is wet,
 Becomes the oft unwelcome bride
 Of him whose scorn he cannot hide.
 He knows men laugh and, scoffing, say:
 "They'll live to—fight another day!"

But they are rich! *Que voulez-vous?*
 Their recognition people woo;
 They can't afford to snub a man
 Built on the million-dollar plan!
 But Mrs. Jones, of low degree,
 Must never dream of being free;
 Divorces are a great expense;
 She's neither wealth nor influence;
 Therefore, her acts are misconstrued
 By Slander and her ugly brood.

She has not read the hidden clause
Whereby the laws evade the laws,
Because Society, you see,
Both maker is and patentee.
But if you're rich, just name a cause—
Immediately it fits the laws;
Divorce is yours as soon as asked,
And reasons pigeonholed or masked.
Yet judges in the Empire State
Of their eternal justice prate!

Should Mrs. Brown to law appeal
She finds no methods to conceal
Her woes from common people's eyes—
That privilege her purse denies.
If she's divorced, she's pointed out
As one who's character's in doubt.
If Mr. Brown were only kind—
Would only try men's eyes to blind!
Alas! A spouse like that is rare;
None but a multi-millionaire

Who understands most thoroughly
The nature of Society
Will bear the brunt of "vulgar taste;"
He knows he cannot be disgraced;
He knows that nothing dulls his fame—
That women court him just the same.
Who says that merit makes the man,
Or that the million-dollar plan
Is not the only one that wins?
That money does not cover sins?

It all depends on who you are,
This action of the Bench and Bar,
And if you pay the entrance fee
You're welcomed by Society.
And she whose morals are so crude
Assumes a virtuous attitude—
Becomes exacting! Fancy that!
She must rheumatic be, and fat,
For only physical decay
Can drive her innate sin away.

You'll find that those with most to hide
Are always first to blame and chide;
The first to claim a pedigree,
And show a mystic family tree
That proves an English ancestor
Made noble by a thieving war,
Perhaps all others set above
By some vile king's illicit love!
The spawn of immorality
Is often all of ancestry.

Suppose that you are asked to dine
 With Acalmayne or Hazyltyne.
 There may be fifty others there—
 Successful men and women fair;
 Perhaps across, just *vis-à-vis*,
 Or at your right or left, maybe,
 The creature once you called your wife,
 Now someone's else. Well, such is life!
 For though the Church where Fashion kneels,
 And at whose altar Vice conceals

Her thoughts and plans, will still intone
 Against divorce, 'tis widely known
 There's scarce a family in the swim
 That hasn't lost a her or him
 By process called divorce—a law
 That's wise and good, but has a flaw.
 The poor cannot afford divorce,
 And, anyhow, in them it's coarse!
 That's one great benefit, you see,
 Of being in Society!

The Church objects! How very strange
 That its opinion should so change!
 Yet, though it rails against divorce,
 It takes the fees without remorse!
 When Henry Eighth, the murderer,
 At Papal dogma threw a sneer,
 And Catharine dropped for pretty Anne,
 The Church Episcopal began.
 That Church now fights, for all it's worth,
 The very thing that gave it birth.

For churches, like some men, you see,
 Repudiate their ancestry!
 If Rome could only have foreknown
 She would have let the man alone—
 Would have agreed without protest—
 And Adrian himself have blessed
 Fair Anne! Our modern piety
 Conforms to high Society;
 If it did not, the diocese,
 Through poverty, would void its lease.

The things they do in Avenue One,
 Are just like those we know are done
 In Avenue Five—though cheaply clad—
 And equally as good, or bad.
 Though saint or sinner you may be,
 You are condemned eternally
 If you are poor. There's nothing counts
 But money, and in large amounts.
 What mighty differences we see
 'Twixt tweedledum and tweedledee!

The "Other Half," with best intent,
 Where Peter pitched his waistcoat's sent;
 While Aristocracy, the king,
 Can do no wrong, the lovely thing!
 Perhaps a generation hence
 The people now of affluence
 Will court the then aristocrats
 Who live to-day in Bowery flats.
 It all depends on where you live,
 And how much money you can give

To satisfy the appetite
 Of social vultures who delight
 In drawing lines so very fine
 'Twixt lager beer and Alban wine.
 "Beer" on the bottle tells the tale;
 The wretch is carted off to jail!
 A "common drunk" he's called. If "fizz,"
 "Good fellow" then is what he is.
 'Twere shameful to denounce a man
 Built on the million-dollar plan!

And women, "coy and hard to please"—
 If they can claim financial ease—
 The many cups of "tea" they drink
 Would muddle Euclid's brain to think!
 None but the maid and butler know
 How freely wines and liqueurs flow!
 At Sherry's, if you look about
 Before and after plays are out,
 You'll see young matrons drink until
 You think they'd never get their fill!

So much a custom drink has grown,
 So far away decorum flown,
 She that refuses to drink wine
 Is not invited out to dine!
 She's "narrow; bred in country town,"
 And soon the gay set turn her down.
 'Tis by their marriages confessed
 Men seem to like those women best
 Who, were not Plutus on their bond,
 Would call themselves the demimonde!

Some Nero's morals imitate,
 And their defiance demonstrate
 By weding women who have passed
 Through muddy lanes. At first, aghast,
 Men frown, but in a little while
 Speak of their "errors" with a smile.
 It all depends on who you are—
 This action of the social bar.
 Poor Roberts! Men their efforts lent
 To show how Virtue can resent,

THE SMART SET

But in that list some names appear
 Of men whose records are not clear—
 Who clothe and pamper plural wives,
 And women who lead dual lives.
 But they are rich, therefore, who cares
 How boldly they parade their wares?
 No matter how they crowd the boat,
 That makes it all the higher float;
 Success is all; across the sea,
 The passport is—complacency!

These differentiated rules
 Are drafted by a lot of fools
 To show they've neither sense nor wit,
 Nor anything resembling it;
 And yet there is a saving clause
 Incorporated in their laws
 For women. They, too, may deride
 Opinion and throw fear aside
 If only, for their moral health,
 They capture men of boundless wealth.

And now, suppose you go with me
 To lands that border on the sea
 That bounds the West. Some years ago,
 In circumstances meek and low,
 There lived a sturdy Irishman
 Built on the priest-and-parish plan;
 His fellow workmen called him "Jim,"
 And Bill and Mike lived there with him;
 They took a bath each New Year's Day
 And joked and smoked the time away.

A certain maiden lived near by,
 Of ruddy cheek and laughing eye;
 And oh, this strong and buxom maid
 Scrubbed floors, washed dishes and obeyed
 A mistress none too rich, who gave
 A dollar weekly to this brave
 Mavourneen from the Emerald Isle,
 Who took it with contented smile.
 One day, while all the region rang
 With notes this sturdy maiden sang,

Jim, with his pipe hung in his mouth,
 Walked up the hill-path from the south,
 His dinner pail in hand. His eyes
 Fell on the fair one in surprise;
 He caught the hue of nature's hose,
 The careless cut of cotton clothes,
 The curve of neck and legs and arms,
 And fell a victim to her charms.
 "Ach shure!" he smiling said, "'tis you
 Air fair as marnin' whin the jew

“ Shines an the grass. Me gur-rl, ach hone!
 Oi'll not be livin' more alone!”
 So they were wed one sunny morn.
 In proper time were daughters born.
 Jim's hut became the rendezvous
 For Bill and Mike, and Barney, too.
 One day their picks struck virgin gold—
 You know the rest—the story's old;
 Clay pipes no more were to their taste,
 But by perfectos were replaced.

’Twas different when they all got rich,
 And took to politics and “sich.”
 The daughters soon became quite proud,
 And scorned the old, hard-handed crowd;
 They longed for glories of the East,
 Where men and women flirt and feast.
 To-day they live in regal state,
 And, socially, their name is great.
 The once barefooted Irish girls
 Tiaras wear and ropes of pearls.

Some women, fifty years ago,
 Walked miles in cold, heat, rain or snow
 To launder, teach, or sew and mend;
 To-day they call a duchess friend!
 They married men as rich as Jews,
 And now their company they choose!
 And these are they who stand aloof
 And ask you to produce the proof
 That your ancestry's old and blue—
 But cannot give such proofs to you!

They've framed an ancient family tree,
 And it is plain as plain can be—
 Unless, perchance, you're blind as bats—
 That they are real aristocrats!
 Do they regret that over here
 The thing Society holds dear—
 The making of a royal blue—
 None yet has dared to try to do?
 Yet peerages are made just so—
 A fact that all the schoolmen know.

It will not do to look too deep
 In blue-bound books. Let Scandal sleep.
 If only you have wealth enough,
 The world will sneeze when you take snuff.
 Then claim King David and his son,
 That reprobate, Old Solomon,
 For ancestors, and no one cares
 How many European airs
 You ape. No one disputes the man
 Built on the million-dollar plan!

THE SMART SET

Some say our standards have defects,
 That Vice and Virtue are unsexed,
 For women claim the selfsame rights
 In which the sterner sex delights;
 They talk of what they should not know,
 Tell stories anything but "slow;"
 For stories not so very nice
 Have just the "necessary spice."
 And should you blush at what is said
 You're pitied as a country-bred!

Society has grown to be
 The path to notoriety;
 All rights it claims, and vices are
 The more desirable by far,
 Though once a week it goes to pray
 Where paid musicians sing and play,
 And at Religion's great expense
 It makes a bold and bald pretense
 To God and man in holy sighs!
 Ah, how the world loves gilded lies!

At every function, grave or gay,
 'Tis Falsehood holds unquestioned sway;
 The author says he seeks not fame—
 See on the title page his name!
 The politician shuns applause!
 The laws annul the best made laws!
 Religion basks in Falsehood's smiles
 And with her logic faith beguiles!
 She always goes each seventh day
 Where seeking souls are led astray;

Where priests intone for moral good—
 With stomachs filled with fattening food—
 "Man born of woman's full of sin!"
 And rake the contributions in!
 They rant that wine and milk and honey
 Can all be purchased without money,
 Yet charge you dearly for a seat
 Where Christ's purse-proud disciples meet!
 And Falsehood smiles and lifts her head
 At Truth's retreating, gentle tread!

Truth hides her earnest, radiant face
 From nearly all the present race,
 For she is naked, and she knows
 That people judge you by your clothes—
 Though scanty raiment is the rage
 With women on the social stage;
 But Falsehood, always richly dressed,
 Is welcomed, courted and caressed.
 The very man who stands before
 The people, with the precious ore

Transformed to clothing tailor-made,
 With Wealth and Ease on dress parade;
 Who brings his manicured, white hand
 With force upon the cushioned stand—
 More strongly thus to emphasize
 Man-made, Church-instituted lies—
 Would not relinquish one per cent.
 To warm the shabby tenement;
 And yet he calls himself, forsooth,
 “Inspired apostle of the truth!”

“In frosty weather stars shine bright!”
 “Too much prosperity’s a blight!”
 And thus discourses fluently
 On uses of Adversity!
 And while in soothing luxury basks,
 Puts Virtue to Herculean tasks;
 With manner grave and solemn eyes
 He lifts his voice and loudly cries:
 “What’s wealth? Ephemera! It may
 At any moment fly away!”

And tries to prove this “holy writ”—
 The canting, ranting hypocrite!
 For, while he speaks, he knows that he
 Will dine that day most sumptuously;
 And that his bank-book shows a sum
 To strike a poor parishioner dumb!
 But then, such eloquence, you see,
 Is paid for by Society.
 To *preach* the Word is excellence;
 To *practice* it is lack of sense!

Society, the stupid thing,
 Is noted for its blundering.
 “Beasts find out where their talents lie;
 A bear will not attempt to fly.”
 If Swift lived in this century
 I’d pity poor Society!
 He never would its airs applaud;
 He’d soon expose its gilded fraud,
 And tear to shreds the walls it’s built
 And show the world its deep-dyed guilt.

Were he alive to-day to see
 The doings of Society,
 His witty tongue and stinging pen
 Would make him feared by all the men;
 As for the women—shades of Eve!—
 They’d bribe him first, I do believe,
 With feasts at the Astoria,
 Where Fashion shows its moria.
 A very Juvenal was he,
 And knew the aristocracy!

Oh, wonderful Astoria,
 To you I sing a gloria!
 What tavern here or o'er the sea
 Compares with you in luxury?
 The old, the young, the good, the bad,
 The solemn, giddy, serious, glad,
 All congregate within your walls;
 'Tis there the Smart Set gives its balls;
 'Tis there all sorts of schemes are hatched,
 And many matches are unmatched.

'Tis there, in brief, the whole world goes
 In fine, and oft unpaid for, clothes;
 There Oscar strolls from room to room,
 As smiling as a new-made groom.
 He could some curious stories tell;
 But Oscar guards a secret well.
 Flirtation flourishes; champagnes
 Flow like the equinoctial rains;
 There may be purchased anything,
 From virtue to a Rhinestone ring!

The *nouveau riche*, the scoria,
 All visit gay Astoria—
 All anxious to be seen and see
 And ape the aristocracy;
 And in the Red Room congregate
 Both sexes in a gracious state,
 To play high games of every kind,
 And often raise the ante blind.
 And Shoddy often has a seat,
 Quite close beside the Real Elite.

There women old and worn and gray—
 Led by their vanity astray—
 Who wear a wig or dye their hair,
 In Peacock Alley sit and stare.
 Paints red and white hide lines of pain,
 While gowns and gems show worldly gain.
 Their comments prove how well they're drilled,
 And in finesse they're deeply skilled.
 Night after night, day after day,
 You'll find them in that passageway!

Ah, were I a Du Maurier,
 The women of Astoria
 Should see themselves as others see,
 In all their droll absurdity.
 I'd lift the silken masks they wear
 And show just what is under there.
 But they are Fashion's little slaves,
 And so, until they reach their graves—
Similia similibus—
 They'll ever be exactly thus.

Society's a funny thing;
 From *ennui* always suffering,
 Its matrons take up every fad,
 And folly unto folly add.
 They imitate *ombrage* joys:
 The clog dance, with its dirt and noise;
 The skirt dance, with its pretty hints;
 The cake-walk—done in gauze, not chintz;
 And what may be, not what it should—
 Why, that's the very thing that's good.

The circus has its counterpart
 In polo, and men think it smart
 To race around a tanbark ring
 And set the world to wondering
 Why it the difference cannot see
 Twixt tweedledum and tweedledee;
 And they have rooms devoted to
 Bridge, baccarat and poker, too,
 And *rouge-et-noir*; and women play
 And gamble our respect away.

Then, once a year, there is the show
 Where all the world and horses go;
 Where women, draped in lace and gems,
 With dollars stitched in tucks and hem,
 Whose glowing cheeks make Beauty blush
 At such misuse of paint and brush,
 Sit stared at and, by some, admired;
 And what they wear and do is wired
 In breathless haste to Western towns,
 That ape their manners, ways and gowns.

The speedy horses, it may be,
 Like their consistent company.
 The Dog Show is a great mistake;
 Comparison can but awake
 The sense of humor we possess,
 And makes us value mankind less.
 Oh, much-enduring dogs, to live
 With men! To you our praise we give!
 The more we know of men, ah, me!
 The more we honor dogs, you see.

The season of the waistless gown—
 The Opera—comes next to town;
 To this the whole Astoria goes
 In many gems and scanty clothes;
 'Tis there we see most brilliant things:
 Great diamond stomachers and rings
 That make the dullest creature bright,
 Indeed, a "great and shining light!"
 Of worth are these the evidence?
 It's *luck* the Horseshoe represents!

The Smart Set smile when Calvé sings,
 And in her manner passion flings.
 They wish that they, like *Carmen*, could
 Get rid of burdens as they would;
 And at the Opera the gown
 That always seems just slipping down
 Is called "décolleté;" Bowery girls,
 In imitative social whirls,
 Are such exposure not allowed
 In any half-way decent crowd.

The Smart Set golf! That is a link
 In Fashion's chain, and many think
 The sometime winning of a game
 The very height of worldly fame.
 The women vent their joy in cheers
 To see their gallant cavaliers—
 Full-grown, mature, courageous souls—
 Chase little balls in little holes
 With little sticks! Great Xenophon!
 What will they be if they keep on!

If they continue as begun,
 In nineteen thousand twenty-one
 Their high positions they will hold
 As did their ancestors of old—
 By means of long, prehensile tails.
 The lesson of the ages fails,
 And so our nineteenth century knights
 Are funny, yet pathetic, sights
 In knickerbockers, with a bag
 Of sticks, and full of aitchless brag.

And tennis! *Ciel!* My merry muse
 Rebels at tennis shirts and shoes,
 So I must pass it lightly by.
 Here's hoping that the fad will die!
 But dwellers in Tuxedo say
 The childish sport has come to stay;
 That it is more than just a whim,
 Since brawn, not brain, rules in the swim;
 For brawn the stupidest can get,
 While brain—is not in fashion yet.

Of healthful exercise men prate!
 If muscle they would cultivate,
 Out West, beneath the mountains' weight,
 Are places where a precious freight
 Awaits the pick. Then go to work
 At that or anything; don't shirk.
 No matter though your world upbraid,
 Prove that you're more than tailor-made.
 Assert yourselves! Be men, and free
 From shackles of Society.

When all the pious world opposed
 The ball, said heaven's doors are closed
 'Gainst any who would dare to dance,
 The talk did nothing but enhance
 Temptation, and Terpsichore
 Enjoyed vast popularity.
 When preachers urge men to refrain
 From anything that is a bane,
 Such curiosity they raise
 That thing becomes at once a craze.

Society forthwith adopts
 The fad, for nothing ever stops
 Its devotees from hunting proof
 Why they should hold themselves aloof
 From things of which the clergy speak
 In smothered Latin or in Greek.
 Just hint at impropriety,
 And instantly Society
 Decides it wants that very thing,
 And then begins manœuvring.

Where Newport sands the ocean laves,
 Old Neptune, ruler of the waves,
 Has set his mermaids all at work
 To see that no bacilli lurk
 In H₂O. Society
 Is careful that no vulgar see
 It take its dainty ocean bath;
 It would arouse its well-bred wrath
 Should some rebellious breaker roll
 Poor persons to that rich man's goal.

It all depends on where you go
 To take a bath or hold a show.
 At Newport everything is tried—
 And then the rumors are denied!
 Society, they say, will not
 Do things so very polyglot;
 The things we hear of being done
 Are "from an envious fancy spun!"
 Its devotees are "too well-bred"—
 O Slander, hide your hydra-head!

Oh, queen of contrariety—
 Whom mortals call Society—
 You fraud! You mocking, shocking thing!
 Far better is your cruel sting
 Than all your kisses, for we know
 They hold a poison, keen, though slow.
 Why don't you try to make true friends,
 And use your power for noble ends?
 But no! You do the very things
 For which outsiders get your stings!

You network of hypocrisy,
Misnamed the aristocracy!
What are you but a great pretense—
An ever-growing great expense?
What is it but an endless strife
And worry to enjoy "high life?"
And when you fall in that long sleep,
Who for your death an hour will weep?
When your enfranchised, soaring soul
Can hear Time's glorious anthems roll

Through wondrous worlds vibrating where
To mortals shine the heavens fair;
Can pierce the hydrogenic blue
That human science fails to woo;
And while Orion plays and sings,
You dance around old Saturn's rings,
And in your disembodied whirl
Swing on those twelve fair gates of pearl,
We'll all your frantic efforts see
To gain ingress, Society!

Know you that there are worlds in space
Whose pedigree you cannot trace?
Great worlds on Time's eternal strand—
To which this earth's a grain of sand—
Inhabited by people who
Can claim no blood of red or blue?
And those who posed—imposed—as kings
And queens, and such like silly things,
Create no more sensation there
Among the dwellers in the air,

Than they who laid down sewer-pipes
Or wore the prison's zebra stripes!
There, prominence upon this earth
Arouses but a gentle mirth;
That you were in the social swim
Counts nothing with the seraphim;
No suppliants kiss your garments' hems;
You'll wear no jeweled diadems.
The only crowns you'll see are wrought
Of kindly deed and kinder thought.

Oh, puppets of Society!
Are you so vain you cannot see
Your glaring faults? Why don't you look
Beneath the title of your book?
You kneel at shrines where Folly reigns,
And folly all your conduct stains!
When other people you would blame,
Look at yourselves, and blush in shame!
The more you censure others' deeds
The greater are your moral needs.

If what we say portrays the mind,
 No evidence can science find
 That there is the minutest crumb
 Of thought within your cerebrum.
 Pray, what are you but protoplasm,
 That once in Evolution's chasm
 Was so minute and so obscure?
 You were not "recognized, I'm sure."
 Men are, however, great or small,
 But compound atoms; that is all!

'Tis true that now you live in style,
 Who once, perhaps, swam in the Nile
 When that historic river ran
 "Through caverns measureless to man
 Down to a silent, sunless sea"—
 A trilobite, undoubtedly.
 When Darwin told us what we are
 He raised a great religious war,
 Because vain, blind, self-loving man,
 Built on the million-dollar plan,

Sees nothing in his mind or shape
 That bears resemblance to the ape!
 Oh, "wad some power the giftie gie us
 To see oursel's as ithers see us!"
 He'd be obliged, then, to subscribe
 Himself one of the gibbon tribe;
 But being rich, he still would be
 Sought after by Society,
 For every creature thinks its kind
 The fairest in both form and mind!

But take this truth close to your heart:
 This fleshly inn, this earthly mart,
 This world that you so long have ruled,
 In Time's great calendar's scheduled
 To be a bare and frozen place—
 Perhaps a moon to brighten space.
 Your flesh will feed the elements
 And furnish the ingredients
 That nourish all the bacilli
 That poison air and land and sea!

Your fame is written on the air,
 And will be wafted—who knows where?
 But you'll live in this world again—
 Immortal souls in mortal men—
 And struggle just as eagerly
 To rule us all, Society;
 To teach the creeds your arts reveal,
 That heavy gilding can't conceal;
 That all of life, to you, on earth,
 Is riches, pleasure, show and mirth!

Farewell, farewell, Society,
 You queen of notoriety!
 You jeweled impropriety!
 You mother of variety
 And breeder of satiety!
 Farewell, oh, aristocracy,
 You network of hypocrisy!
 You callow, shallow mockery!
 Of Vice the wealthy patentee!
 Farewell to thee, farewell to thee!



THE DANGER OF CHLOROFORM

“AND how is the hand to-day, darling?” inquired Mr. Dovey, fondly.
 “Oh!” sighed Mrs. Dovey, “the pain has been something frightful. I have had to send for the doctor. He is coming to lance it. I expect him here every minute.”

“My own brave little woman!”

“Not so very brave, either. I am going to take chloroform.”

“Oh, Amorella, don’t, please!”

“It won’t cost so much more.”

“As if I thought of that!”

“You want to see me tortured, then. After only two months of marriage!”

“How can you talk like that, Amorella? Why, don’t you know? sometimes people die under chloroform.”

“You say that just to frighten me. But I don’t care. I’ll risk it. Ah, here’s the doctor! You will give me chloroform, won’t you, doctor?”

“Certainly; I have come prepared.”

“And you assure me there is no danger?”

“None whatever.”

“My husband here has been trying to frighten me with stories of people dying under the influence.”

“Ah, but not where the medical man thoroughly understands the patient’s constitution. Here, Dovey, take hold of this sponge. By the way, I was administering it yesterday to an old patient of mine, and really he was most amusing.”

“Yes?”

“The way the old fellow talked about his early love affairs! He gave himself away dreadfully. It was great fun!”

“What did he say, doctor?” inquired Mrs. Dovey, anxiously.

“Excuse me. I ought not to repeat it.”

“He knew, of course, that only you were there.”

“Oh, if the whole city had been there, it would have been all the same. Are you ready now, Mrs. Dovey?”

“Will it hurt very much, doctor—the lancing?”

“With the chloroform you won’t know anything about it.”

“Don’t you think I might manage to bear it without any?”

“Better not try. You might faint.”

“Besides, Amorella, the doctor says there is no danger in your case.”

“No! no! no! I want to show you men how a weak woman can bear pain.”

“But just now, darling, you were determined—”

“Yes, dear, but I have been thinking. You would be here all the while, and—you would be so anxious.”

THE REJUVENESCENCE OF STANNY

By Mrs. Burton Harrison

HE was neither handsome, nor young, nor brilliant, nor rich, nor did he belong to a ruling family in the little world on stilts that calls its own the best society of the metropolis. But one saw or heard of him everywhere, and no entertainment of the New York or Newport season was complete without him. During a portion of the year he eked out the income of a modest patrimony by some mild variety of occupation downtown, supposed to absorb his mornings, but by the ladies regarded as not appreciably preventing conversation with him by telephone about social engagements for the evening.

Men hardly thought of him at all except as a most obliging chap—always there when you wanted him—an authority on the Baltimore way of cooking canvasbacks and terrapin, to be depended upon for the latest *on dits* of the clubs, and a capital hand at whist.

Mr. Stanislaus Parker Selden was the name to be seen upon his cards and on the numerous invitations that encumbered the writing-table in the sitting-room of his bachelor lodgings near his favorite club. "Stanny," the girls called him, and of late he had received a disagreeable reminder of the flight of years through a certain prefix to this familiar "little name." He had been going outside into the night to look up the recreant footman of a great lady who wanted to hurry home from an Assembly Ball, and, with his hat on and coat collar turned up about his ears to meet the frosty air, had overheard a colloquy between two maidens who also were waiting for their carriages.

"Who took you in to supper?" asked one of these fair ones of the other.

"Why, didn't you see? 'Old Stanny,' to be sure! My partner was kept at home by an attack of pink-eye, and the old boy filled his place!"

"Good old Stanny!" said the other young lady, placidly.

"Old boy!" "Good old Stanny!" Mr. Selden winced perceptibly, and did not let himself be seen by them. Instead of staying out the cotillion, as usual, he went home to his lodgings, turned the electric lights full on to his dressing-mirror, and surveyed his image anxiously.

True, he was past thirty-five, but was not that the second Summer of manhood, when he who has passed unscathed through the first period of susceptibility to women's charms, and power to impress himself upon their imagination, is generally supposed to bloom out anew in the parterre of possibilities? He was balder than he liked, but he believed women regarded that deficiency as "distinguished" when accompanied by good features and figure. His face was, indeed, singularly youthful in outline and complexion. Why, then, should he be classed among the elders?

Was it because they considered him so completely out of the matrimonial running? Because his function in society had been hitherto that of aiding other people to taste of joys he had no time to savor, was he to be forever excluded from them? How many times had he been the first confidant of engagements, best man at weddings, godfather at christenings, adjuster of married tiffs, envoy between separated couples! What a host of

people he had brought or kept together in the connubial bond! Life, as he looked back on it, seemed a long vista of assisting acquaintances to meet, pair, march up to the altar together, shine for a while before the public gaze, then drop off to swell the tide of humdrum married folk, or else reappear, bringing their disputes before the world!

Stanny began to suspect he had been too intent on strewing flowers in other people's paths to pick any for himself. He had always meant to seek a wife when the time came, and now, by Jove, the time would appear to have passed him by. His busy career as a social intermediary might have known no disturbance, but that the pert saying of a "bud," to whose rescue he had gone, to save her from going in with her chaperon to a ball supper, had been sufficient to open his eyes to actualities. For the first time in his life he felt dissatisfied with his lot. He looked with discontent around the two tidily kept rooms that constituted his kingdom, wherein his personal requirements were amply met by a certain "Valeting Company, Limited," guaranteed to supply the home atmosphere to unattached gentlemen. When he came back to his quarters he was wont to find everything nicely done for him, from sweeping and dusting to mending socks and putting evening buttons in his shirts.

Always, heretofore, he had delighted in his various compact appliances for pseudo-domestic comfort; his electric disk for boiling a kettle; his apparatus for tea-making; his asbestos gas-log in a nickel grate; his bed-post, from which at a touch flashed forth the lambent radiance of a shaded electric light; his easy-chair, convertible by two kicks and a jog into an Oriental couch; his revolving book-cases, behind which lurked boots on trees; his wardrobe shelves, that shot out, revealing neatest piles of shirts; his hatboxes, coat-stretchers and trouser-stretchers—all of the paraphernalia of bachelor life which had stood him in good stead of the consolations of a dual existence.

His cigar boxes were never meddled with, *his* little toilet trifles never displaced. Until now, he would not have given these snug quarters for a palace in Fifth avenue, but now—

"Good old Stanny," indeed! What the deuce did the chit mean by such impudence?

He went next day to tea with a woman whom he thought he could depend upon for an intelligent and truthful reading of his riddle.

"I beg your pardon," he said, cutting short Mrs. Shannon's outline of a theatre-party of twenty-five which she was to give, her husband to stay away from and Stanny to conduct, "I hope you won't think me a fool, you know, if I ask you whether they—the women generally—consider me quite out of the running, as far as—as far as—falling in love and getting married, like other fellows, goes?"

"Bless me, my dear Mr. Selden!" cried his candid friend, "it isn't that you're too old, or anything of that sort. But we simply couldn't fill your place. Pray don't suggest anything so disastrous, even as a pleasantry. You *can't* belong to any one woman, you know; all the others would rise up and remonstrate."

"I didn't know," murmured "good old Stanny," coldly comforted by her assurance; "I only thought I'd ask."

"Who has been putting ideas into your head? We call you 'the moon that looks on many brooks,' and, of course, the brooks see but one moon. Why, I consider that you owe it as a duty to your exalted position as confidant and counselor-in-chief of our set never to think of falling in love. And as to marriage, it would be perfect slavery to you after liberty so long. Now confess it would. Be reasonable. Justify our belief in you as the only man of our acquaintance always to be relied upon, always equable, always considerate, always amiable."

"That is it," interrupted Stanny, sadly. "I'm afraid I've been too amiable. A younger fellow prancing around as I've done might be endurable. But an old one—"

Mrs. Shannon interrupted him in

turn. "How ridiculous! Don't call yourself names; I won't hear of it. Why, under a rose-colored lamp shade like this, I shouldn't give you over twenty-five. I'm afraid you've a little indigestion. If so, do try my new man, the most delightful creature, not exactly a doctor, but a healer through sympathy. He's awfully good-looking, and he comes and sits and sits by the hour, and is really getting quite a name among us. If he were only a little more of a gentleman, one might invite him to dinner. Since I've had him I'm eating everything. But dear me, I mustn't waste time. I've something of more importance than the theatre-party to talk to you about. I know I can rely upon your absolute discretion, Mr. Selden."

Stanny was accustomed to this preamble. He settled down to listen as a cab-horse goes into shafts.

"The theatre-party, as I told you, is to be given for my husband's niece, a girl from, say, Kalamazoo, whom I have promised to take under my wing and launch in New York society. I have never seen Petronella. Sounds like a fairy tale, doesn't it? but that's the ridiculous name actually given to her in baptism."

"Petronella," he ejaculated. There had never been but one of that name outside the covers of the old red fairy book. She was a girl he had known in Cambridge in his sophomore year, enough older than he to captivate his fancy. Dear, dear, how far away that seemed! "She was a Shaw," he said, dreamily, "and married a Shannon, and went West—"

"Of course she did," said the lady, briskly. "Nella is their child. The mother died when she was born, eighteen years ago."

"Dead?" he repeated. "So young, so fair, so full of spirits! That is very sad."

"My dear Mr. Selden, I shall begin to take back what I said about your getting on in life if you don't pull yourself together and pay attention to matters in hand. My sister-in-law was, no doubt, an excellent as well

as a charming person, but I wish they had managed to have some other guardians than ourselves for Nella (did I tell you she is now an orphan and absurdly rich?) after she reached her eighteenth birthday. It will alter our whole establishment, our whole scheme of life, of course. My good husband, realizing this, actually went and bought me a new string of pearls before he broached the matter to me at all. And as I always put my duty to him first, I could but give acquiescence gracefully. Next week the young lady will arrive. I shall have an afternoon tea for her and a dance; this little dinner and theatre-party is simply to bring her in contact with a few young people I want especially to have her know."

"I shall be doubly glad to meet the young lady now," responded Stanny, with gallantry.

"Oh, but you haven't got to the core of the matter yet. You, who know everybody's family affairs, understand that we shall feel a great responsibility about the man she will marry. Unfortunately, when one mentions a new girl who is pretty, and has a fortune, too, the 'man she will marry' comes in with one's very next breath. Confidentially speaking, we are told that there is a suitor, some quite barbarous being, who is mad about her, and follows her everywhere, sending flowers every day wherever she may be, and so on. This must be looked into and guarded against by every means in our power. Here I can exercise some discretion about the men she meets, but I shall never feel quite at ease without someone to help me outside. The girl is too young to choose for herself, and probably too headstrong to bear contradiction. You know what my husband is. Excellent, admirable in domestic life, but singularly indifferent to the course events take, provided he can enjoy his ease in his own way out of business hours."

Mrs. Shannon paused for breath and poured herself out another cup of tea. Stanny, through long experience, said nothing. He knew it was

the only way to hasten a woman's narrative to the climax. Besides, he was getting to feel a little scared.

"In this complication, who was there to whom I could turn, in thought, but you, dear Mr. Selden? Who else possesses the tact, the knowledge of the world, the delicacy and the true chivalry to manage such an affair? I don't want to impose on you—nothing is farther than that from my desire. I only thought you could manage to keep an eye on her in general company, win her confidence, exercise your best skill in weaning her away from the idea of marriage with *anyone*. The fact that you were once acquainted with her poor mother is an excellent card—I mean, quite a heavenly dispensation! I always did think that the angels walk with us every day and watch and guide our steps. I'll send you a little poem I wrote on the subject. It was printed, anonymously, on hand-made paper, in violet ink, with silver capitals. Do you know, when you asked me just now that odd question whether women consider you 'out of the running,' I didn't answer you quite fully? I ought to have said—but the best proof of it is what I've just asked you to do for me—that we don't *think*, we *know* you to be absolutely safe!"

Selden felt a sort of tingling of the ears. Spite of the caressing flattery of her manner, he had a pained sense of revolt against being put outside the pale of masculine attractiveness. What had he been doing all these years but throwing away, with both hands, the golden coin of youth, to receive thus early in exchange only the leaden currency of middle age? He had a mad temptation to wish himself quite other than he was, but wisely restrained it. As in silence he lifted his teacup to conceal a tinge of color that crept over his face, he caught sight of himself in an empire mirror opposite. He was smitten to the heart with the conviction that he did look old, staid, unemotional—the very man to act as dragon to a blooming young creature of eighteen.

"Absolutely safe!" That was worse than "good old Stanny!"

However, he swallowed his feelings with his tea and managed to answer graciously that Mrs. Shannon knew she might command him now as always. He could not promise her to play any part toward Miss Shannon but that of a faithful friend and guardian, in so far as it might be agreeable to the young lady to have him do so. He would assuredly not intrude upon her affairs, or seek to gain her confidences.

"Lord, my dear man!" cried his hostess, "that you need never try to do. You know, it's said women can't be with you ten minutes without making you their father confessor. I suppose it's partly because you are so delightfully impartial and impersonal, as well as your keeping secrets like a trump. Every other man one knows manages to get his own personality into his relations with one. They are all so frightfully vain and selfish, and twist everything around to give it a private and personal application, which women, it is well known, never do—"

"Oh, Mrs. Shannon!" Selden longed to say, but she gave him no chance to interpose.

"While you—one might as well be talking to a priest—and it's so much nicer not being preached at, or absolved. Really, I feel as if a weight were off my mind. I can now bear to think of Nella's arrival without worry and discomfort. I just foresee that she will make her uncle do anything she likes. He is so absurdly weak with young and pretty people—did I tell you she is a beauty? Here—" getting up and sweeping a wonderful trail of satin cutwork over velvet half across the floor to reach down from the mantelshelf a cabinet photograph—"is her latest portrait, and you can judge for yourself of your new charge."

"She is her mother over again, but prettier," said Selden, soberly regarding it.

"That's what they say; and fairly well gowned, isn't she? but oh, if she

has *the accent*, what shall—what shall I do?"

"Let us hope for the best, my dear lady. Miss Shannon, if she has all the rest of the gifts bestowed at birth upon a person of a fairy book, is entitled to some one drawback."

In his heart he felt less calm and conventional than his speech and manner indicated. It was as if a wind from the west had suddenly blown about him, scattering Autumn leaves from around his feet. Already he was conscious of a jealous desire to play watchdog to Miss Nella, to put to flight anyone unworthy to be in the magic circle surrounding her beauty and girlish innocence. He recalled, quite sharply now, the pangs of boy love he had once felt for her mother, a passion half-forgotten, or at least wholly covered in by the débris of subsequent years.

II

BEFORE the ease-loving aunt of the young lady from Kalamazoo had enjoyed twenty-four hours of Miss Nella's society, she found herself in possession of what is commonly called "a handful." She decided at once that the new pearl necklace bestowed upon her by her spouse, to conciliate favor for his forthcoming niece, had been acquired at something beyond the highest market price. And the provoking part of it was that she could not honestly lay the girl's personal peculiarities at the door of her "Western" training. Nella had been appropriately educated by an English governess, phlegmatic, or she could not have stood it so long, decided Mrs. Shannon, but sufficiently under the spell of her pupil's personality to weep copiously at parting with her. There was little to find fault with in the tone and manner of the girl's speech. The trouble lay in the unexpected truthfulness, in season and out, with which Miss Shannon was wont to entreat her acquaintances; in her impetuous bursts of unconventional action, and in her absolute refusal

to differentiate between the higher grades of New York society.

In the way of looks, she had proved to be all that her photograph had promised, and more—pretty enough to have "gone" without her reputed fortune, so the quidnuncs said. She reached town and was introduced to the gay world on the wane of rather a hard season, when everybody was worn out with repeated dinners and nightly dances. Her fresh beauty, her quaint, almost brusque, manner, her unjaded interest and curiosity in the passing show created a new atmosphere in stale centres. Her comments on things and people were quoted by those whom they did not touch, and brought around her a brave number of men in public. The girls liked her because she gave no sign of petty jealousies, admiring with honest fervor those among them who pleased her fancy; those who affronted her sense of proportion or seemed to her ridiculous through snobbery or affectation she let severely alone. Altogether, and without the least delay, Miss Shannon became the sensation of the hour!

Nella's first impression of Mr. Stanislaus Selden, on the occasion of the theatre-party—which was, by his agreement with her aunt, to place that gentleman in the preliminary exercise of his functions as private detective over her public actions—was one of amusement. She asked Mrs. Shannon if he were hired in to make the party go, and pitied his dreary lot. Cut by her mockery of mien, Selden kept away from her merry company during the first part of the evening, remaining in another box than the one to which Nella was allotted.

In the second *entr'acte* he looked in, at Mrs. Shannon's request, to see if all went well with that detachment of her forces. What was his surprise to behold a change on Nella's April face—a little storm-cloud perched on her piquant eyebrows! Hastily rising and leaving her position in the front, she beckoned him aside in the shadows of the rear of the box.

"Mr. Selden," she said, abruptly, "I'm sorry I wasn't nice to you just now. Since you have been sitting in the next box I've been watching you, and I've come to the conclusion that you are not in the least what I supposed. But I haven't time even to tell you that now. I must do it afterward. The truth is, I need your help."

Poor "old Stanny" bowed submissively. They all did that, heaven pity him! If there could be found only one woman uninspired to exact from him a service! "For the last half hour I've been upon thorns," the girl went on, with real feeling in her eyes and voice; "somebody has come into the orchestra stalls who makes me miserable whenever I think of him, and he has never taken his eyes off my face till now. It has been such hard work to laugh and go on with the others just the same. He said he would do it. He vowed he would keep me always in his sight. It isn't fair, when I've asked for time to make up my mind."

"No one shall be allowed to annoy you, certainly," answered Selden, following with a glance the movement of her fan.

"That is he—that tall, dark man with a large mustache, in the sixth row from the orchestra. He has a white carnation in his coat. Don't let him see us looking. He is quite capable of scowling openly and making a scene."

"I see him," said Selden, briefly. "He is not one to be overlooked. Still less, my dear young lady, if you will permit me to suggest it, is he one to be encouraged to an acquaintance with such as you."

"Oh! but you don't understand, quite," she said. "If you are to help me at all, I'll have to tell you that we are, in a way, engaged."

Stanny recoiled.

"In a way! What way is there, but one, for heaven's sake?"

"How cross you are! How can I tell you here, now? I have known him for ages, and he is one of the principal young men in our town."

"Then I am sorry for the inferior young men. That brute! Why, you can't be serious."

"I don't know what I am," she said, tears welling to her eyes. "But he has worried me almost to death. When he's near, I'm never myself. Since I came to New York, I've seemed to breathe freer, and see things in a different light. Please don't call him names, though, for if you do I'll be sure to marry him—it's always so. And I don't want to marry anyone. I asked him to give me six months free, and he consented, but here he is again!"

"Tell me what you wish me to do?" said Selden. "For myself, I know very well what I want to do."

"Take an opportunity—there, he has gone out; he hopes to meet me walking in the lobby. As if I would!" she said, in honest disgust. "Go and tell him, from me, that I can't and won't see him, anywhere; that my uncle and aunt have forbidden him their house, and that I shall answer no notes or letters he may write."

"Well done!" he exclaimed, noting with admiration the rising spirit in her manner. "A little more of this, and you would be rid of him altogether. Might I ask the gentleman's name?"

"Wallace Randall. Indeed, he is very well connected, out our way, and is thought so very handsome. But he is cruel to persecute me so—you see, I began it, in fun, when I was only seventeen, and he's sworn never to give me up."

"That is enough for the present. Go back to your seat, and trust me to do the rest."

"Of course, you won't quarrel with him?" she exclaimed, naïvely, "for, after all, he has some sort of right over me—I suppose he considers himself engaged."

"He is a cad and a poltroon," said Stanny, between his teeth, as he went off, "to follow and annoy a child of her age and innocence."

On his way through the lobby he felt the blood circulating in his veins with a velocity unknown in recent

years. The appeal of Miss Shannon's wide-open blue eyes was in effect quite different from those of the maids and matrons of society in general in whose service he had spent so many seasons. And while so meditating, he came face to face with Mr. Wallace Randall, smoking a large cigar, and glaring darkly upon the world at large.

Exactly what means were employed by our archdiplomatist to relieve the tense situation may be only conjectured. That he restrained himself so far as to accomplish his results by courtesy instead of crude muscular effort, which his inner man yearned to expend, may be put down to his credit. It is certain that the weeks following this opening episode of her sojourn in New York were enjoyed by Miss Nella as a season of unwonted peace from the irksome thought of her lover. She was so thankful to be free and happy in her own way! She expanded her wings in the sunlight and floated rejoicingly through space, confiding to her now sworn friend, Stanny, that all she ever wanted of a man henceforth was to take her out to dinner or to dance.

Mrs. Shannon, ignorant of the dramatic beginning of Selden's service in her behalf, was delighted at the success of her little scheme. Nella was run after by a dozen young fellows, but favored no one more than the other. Wherever she went the faithful Stanny was on duty. Except for Nella's rather startling manners and costumes, the chaperon's mind was comparatively at rest. If Nella had been a nice, wholesome little boy she could not have been more frankly indifferent to the presence of the other sex.

Stanny soon found that in his friendship with the girl the lecturing was not to be all on his side. She brought him up with a jerk of the reins about his most rooted peculiarities.

She arraigned him for not doing fuller justice to his manly abilities, for letting himself be imposed upon by a lot of puppets of society, for leading a purposeless life in general. She

laughed at his staid speech, his conventional mannerisms, his acceptance of society dicta as final in deciding points at issue. Whenever they were together Selden found himself minding p's and q's to an extent hitherto unbelievable. He actually altered the cut of his beard, brushed his hair another way, gave up wearing gaiters, sat less submissively when in audience with a leader of his world, lost interest in previous occupations, and walked with a freer stride—all because she had commented unmercifully upon his prior methods of accomplishing these things.

Gradually the rumor crept about that good "old Stanny" was losing his value as a social arbiter. Ladies, putting their heads together at luncheons and over the after-dinner coffee cups, agreed that he had "gone off" dreadfully. Those people who had always envied him his vogue rejoiced in the signs of his downfall. A very young man, from nowhere in particular, who had given evidence at Newport during the summer previous of great adaptability in Stanny's line, came forging to the front as his probable successor. Cliques were formed, some warmly pushing the claims of the later pretender, others advocating Stanny's retention in authority. Next, Mr. Stanislaus P. Selden was heard of in a new capacity. Forming a business partnership downtown, he launched into certain affairs where his knowledge of men and things, his tact and ease in taking the initiative, were employed with immediate success. Men who were accustomed to look upon him as a domesticated favorite of their dinner-tables and card-parties were astonished at the first fruits of his work in a broader arena. Modestly, although secretly excited by his own achievements in business, Selden went on to push his conquests farther. A great financier, "happening" upon him accidentally, utilized his peculiar ability as an adviser and promoter in a scheme opening wider vistas than Stanny had ever yet contemplated. He woke up one morning to find himself on the way to fortune and con-

sequence, and with every nerve keyed to new interest in living. From that date tea-parties and cotillions mourned for him in vain. He was seen no more in the boudoirs of high society. In his absorption he almost forgot that the Newport season had begun. That Summer he remained in town, at work.

Sitting in his office one hot morning of August, Mr. Selden was called to the telephone by the once familiar information that a lady desired to speak with him. With an expression hardly flattering to his would-be interlocutor, he went laggingly to the little instrument of fate.

"It is I, Mr. Selden—Nella, you know—and I'm in my aunt's house for the day. I want you, please, to come here just as fast as ever you can. It's something really important, and unless you can spare the time to give me, I'll be in despair."

Selden, startled at the sound of her youthful voice, evidently under stress of peculiar feeling, listened, looked at his watch, then answered affirmatively. A few moments later the affairs of the — Company were thrown to the Summer wind, and as fast as an elevated train could take him, its confidential agent was on his way to a point nearest Mrs. Shannon's residence, in Fifth avenue.

The front door, opened for him by the caretaker, a large lady in a Mother Hubbard wrapper of plaid gingham, revealed in the doorway of the library at the rear, amid a congerie of vases, statues, pictures and pieces of furniture draped in brown linen, the figure of a pretty girl in traveling garb of tailor skirt and crisp shirt of azure hue.

"It's you, thank goodness!" she exclaimed, in heartfelt tones, taking his hand to lead him into the shrouded, half-lit room where she had been in lurking. "I have literally lived in terror for the last hour, and the sound of the front door gong sends my nerves into fiddlestrings. Oh, Mr. Selden, you'll never guess what I've done! My aunt and uncle think it's a tooth, and that I've run down to town for the

dentist. They let me come off with my maid—a silly thing, who does whatever I tell her, good or bad. The real truth is, that I've promised to meet and marry Wallace Randall today."

"Good God!" cried Stanny, honestly horrified. "You—you—don't want me to give you away, or anything?"

"Oh, no, no. All the way here I've been repenting. I want you, on the contrary, to take me away—or anything," she cried, with a spice of her old roguery; then alarmed him still further by bursting into a passion of sobbing.

"There, there, my child, you are safe with me. Don't fear him; don't fear anything. Just pull yourself together and tell me how in the world this catastrophe came about."

"In the first place," she said, when she could control her voice—they were sitting together on a couch, and she had not yet loosened her grip upon his hand—"you had deserted me, you know."

"My dear Miss Shannon, how absurd!"

"Yes, you had. It was all business with you, and no thought of foolish little feather-brained girls who teased and tormented you. I missed your help and advice. There was nobody else to whom I dared speak of him. You see, my uncle goes fairly wild at the thought of him."

"And no wonder," replied Stanny. "The man is a holy terror and ought to be shot for persecuting you."

"But you forget the six months are just up. He had begun writing to me again, saying that my influence and your good advice had made him think very differently of things, and that he was resolved to be worthy of me. Really, Mr. Selden, his letters were touching. I am sure the poor fellow has reformed."

"Can the leopard change his spots?" quoth Selden, grimly. "No; but he is cleverer than I gave him credit for."

"He has never let me rest for a moment from the thought of him and

my pledge. I felt guilty at the idea of breaking with him, and I knew there was no use appealing to my aunt and uncle on the subject. At last, in despair, I gave him the promise to put an end to all our troubles by marrying him and going back to Newport to present him to them as my husband. Now, say what you like in abuse of me. I'm only a girl, but if there's one thing more than another that appeals to me, it's loyalty. I knew Mr. Randall before I had all these fine friends, and he loves me more than anyone else does, certainly."

Stanny drew himself away from her with a violent jerk. Did Mr. Randall, could he—that underbred, coarse fellow, unfit for a gentlewoman's company—love little Nella better than—pshaw! the idea was preposterous! He walked away to the end of the large room, then came back to where she had begun to cry again, quietly, in her corner of the couch.

"It's no use. I see you have no sympathy with me," she sobbed. "Everybody is against me, it seems, but Mr. Randall!"

"Hang Mr. Randall!" exclaimed Selden. "If I have to barricade your uncle's front door, and fire at him through the keyhole; if I have to lock you up in this room and keep watch outside of it till your proper guardians come; if I have to carry you off myself—that cad sha'n't get you!"

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Selden!" she cried, fervently. "All I wanted to know was that I had you for a protector. From the first minute I met you, you have seemed the one person I could look to, naturally, for that. Perhaps it was because you knew mamma once; perhaps—"

"You thought of me as a venerable person, stricken with years, upon whose withered arm you could lean with propriety," he said, hotly. "Very well. Think of me as you like, ignore the fact that I'm more madly in love with you than Randall could ever dream of being—call me a ridiculous old fool, if it pleases you,

but I'm going to put you on the train for Newport this afternoon and never leave you till I see you safe at home again. After that, forget me. I shall not trouble you in future."

"Oh! but I want to be troubled," she answered, with a face like "clear shining after rain." "I want to be punished, dreadfully. Nothing can be too bad for me. I am really the very worst girl of your acquaintance. Just wait till you know the truth. I didn't come down to town to marry Wallace Randall at all! Since you taught me what he is, I've rid myself of him altogether. He's even engaged to another girl, who has always wanted him. I came here and I sent for you, and told you that awful story, just because I was hopeless of—"

"What?" cried Stanny, seizing her two hands and looking into the depths of her blue eyes. "You deceived me for nothing? You could play such a trick upon an honest man who respected you? I am ashamed of you, Nella Shannon. You aren't worthy of the feeling I've had for you."

"Perhaps not," said Nella, hanging her head low. "I confess to you that I was hopeless, or I'd never have done such an act of folly. If you had only told me—like everybody else—"

"Told you what?"

"That you—cared—for me. I thought so, but, of course, I wasn't sure."

There was a pause. Selden continued his survey of her downcast, blushing face. His heart was beating quick, but he dared not hope she was not deceiving him anew. Then, at last, she lifted her eyes, and he knew the happy truth.

Thus was achieved the rejuvenescence, and recall to the active industries of life, of a very estimable citizen of Manhattan, who, in default of the heroic methods employed by his enslaver, might never have been reclaimed.

Miss Shannon and her maid returned to Newport that afternoon; Mr. Sel-

den arrived soon at her uncle's house for a week-end visit. In a short time their engagement was announced.

A year before nobody would have approved of Stanny as a *parti*. But circumstances, and the rapid working of big financial schemes in the metropolis, accomplish wonders for some

men in that direction. It was certain that Nella did not regret her choice. After their marriage, in early Autumn, she often addressed him as "good old Stanny," a style and title he could now hear without flinching, strong in the consciousness of its manifest inappropriateness.



DANGERS OF CLASSICALISM

THE PLAINT OF A VERY LEARNED PERSON

PRÆTERITA! Præterita! the tears rise to mine eye,
I weep in sylvan corners where the weird cheiroptera fly,
What time the pallid Luna elevates her head above,
And conjure willowed churchyards up, and mingle pain with love.
Oh, would I had a snowy cot within some whitewashed ward,
Discoursing, in weak whispers, of my final resting sward,
And raised within the lissome arms of some sweet, doe-eyed nurse,
To see the sun set on the lea while daily growing worse!

'Tis not that there is radically a thing amiss with me—
I have a healthy appetite, and pay things C. O. D.;
But with a cloud of mystic pain existence is o'ercast—
How can I love the present when I know there is a past?
I roam the woody hillside, and the leafy glades I scan,
And mourn the loss of Satyr, also that of piping Pan;
I crouch in leafy forest on the marshiest of grounds,
But I never catch a glimmer of Diana or her hounds.

Upon fair Newport's rocky strand I wander oft at large,
And mourn that there is ne'er a sign of Cleopatra's barge;
I've also lachrymated very nearly to the fill
O'er the losses of the Persians on the Marathonian Hill;
At other times I'm duly racked with most exquisite pain
To think that Euclid never will geometrize again;
And all my livelihood is now compressed, beyond belief,
Into a mammoth, classic and a mathematic grief.

ENVOI

By the Head Practitioner of Bellevue

Within the padded cell there raved a mystery to us,
Arrested by an officer with much superfluous fuss.
We judged him, one and all, as most deplorably insane,
But none could specify just what the matter with his brain.
Lo, all researches futile, our suspicions left in doubt,
His parents came upon the scene and took their offspring out;
And in the strongest parlance did the irate pair affirm
Their son was graduating from Columbia next term.

C. F. R.

THE GOLDEN CALF

By Edgar Saltus

NINON DE L'ENCLOS wore her wrinkles on her heels. How she managed it she never told. The secret of her smartness evaporated with her. The secret of contemporary smartness is less clever and more clear.

It consists of three things. One is youth. There are belles and beaux who are no longer young. They are belles and beaux in their own imagination. Imagination is not a prerequisite. Youth is; so, too, is coin, and there is another little thing, entirely atmospheric, which is as difficult to acquire as it is to describe. We have heard a rumor that in Bloomsbury it is known as the *je ne sais quoi*. The meaning of the phrase is beyond us. That may be due to the accent. In Belgravia, though the accent is encounterable, the phrase never is. People there either possess the little thing or they don't. When they don't they are bounders. Returning now to that which a certain familiarity with the classics enables us to call our muttions, given youth and money, and no one need despair of the other. Old people, however rich, can't acquire it. Poor people, however young, can't either. The two things must beat as one. The high regard in which they are held, a certain familiarity with archæology enables us to catalogue as antediluvian. Always has youth been adored, always has money been worshipped. Between them they have managed to monopolize the attention of every drawing-room, prehistoric, pagan and polite. Beauty and brains may be—and have been—talked away; but never money. However obtained,

it is holy. Virtue and vice have been—and always will be—climatic, geographic, relative at that, but youth is unquestionable. There it is, and where it is, there, too, is a great stirring of the affections.

Affections are just like fashions: they come and go. The angel who at twenty appeals, at twenty-one has been known to appall. By the same token, what is smart to-day will be shabby-genteel to-morrow. The only things forever modish are youth and money. To the list we might add death. Death, though, has its disadvantages. So, also, has life. Uncertain as Wall street and false as an obituary, its obvious defect is its brevity. But the obvious is misleading. It is not life that is brief, it is youth. And what is youth without money?

A page once put to himself that question. Quite young, equally impudent and abominably good-looking, one day, or rather one night, across the wide leisure and rigid ceremonial of the Court of Spain, a princess smiled at him and beckoned. That was enough. There and then he was sent to another world, to a better one—to the tropics which Columbus had found. He landed at Hayti, or rather at Hispaniola, as the island was then more musically known, and, with easy gallantry, assisted in eliminating the natives.

Cæsar used to create a solitude and call it Peace. Spain used to do the same thing and call it Civilization. In furthering her designs, the young chap learned that a neighboring island was a mine of gold. It occurred to him that if he got enough of it he

might get the princess also. Through processes with which it is idle to encumber this paragraph, he succeeded. When he left that island, which to-day is known as Puerto Rico, he had gold to melt.

Between the foregoing sentences there are years. There are torrents of blood. There are all the civilizing influences of Spain. Incidentally, the young chap had grown old. Whether he remembered the princess is problematic. That he missed his good looks is clear.

Here the plot thickens. Meanwhile he had heard that a little to the north was a land on which spouted a fountain whose waters effaced old age. To recover his youth he sailed that way. Were we writing fiction we should so arrange as to let him find the fountain, find his youth, find the princess tender and true, or better, perhaps, in view of his rejuvenation, find her daughter, and even her granddaughter, more to his taste. But this is not fiction. It is the history of Ponce de Leon—not the hotel at St. Augustine, but the adventurer after whom it was named. The fountain was not found by him, but Florida was, and with it, not youth but fame.

The fountain which he sought represents the quintessence of a dream which many smart people have shared. It hallucinated the great Alexander. He tramped over India in search of it. Bacon was visited by it. He tried to produce its waters in a still. They represented to him not youth merely, but gold besides. His still produced nothing so important, but if we may believe everything we hear—and we are always most anxious to—there are other alembics which created both.

Of these the most ample was the property of a man who made himself a contemporary of the Pompadour. At the time he was quite young—or appeared to be. But people quite old remembered him as still quite young when they were very youthful. Different people remembered him under different names. The Danish Ambassador remembered him as the Vicomte de Bellamye, whom he had

met, three or four decenniums back, in Venice. The Baron Stoch had dined with him in Lisbon, where he was known as the Duc de Betmar. That, too, was a couple of generations back. An antiquity, in recalling the red-heeled days of the Regency, recalled that he was then the Marquis de Montferrat. When, later, he made himself a contemporary of the Pompadour, he made himself also Count de Saint-Germain. Apparently nothing was easier.

Meanwhile, though his titles had changed, his looks had not. The circumstance is not as surprising as it otherwise might be. According to his own account, he had assisted at the Council of Trent. Other accounts which he gave of himself were equally conciliatory. He had supped with Pilate and thrown dice with Faustine. These accounts, while admired, were not always accepted. In smart circles his origin was regarded as fantastic, but not fabulous. He was said to be the son of a lackey and a queen. In the antitheses of "Ruy Blas" the story is told. It is told so well that it would be an impertinence to repeat it. "Don't touch the dead of Dante," shouted Foscolor; "they frighten the living." The grave of Hugo's dead shall be to us as sacred.

To pass from it to the gay, the Count de Saint-Germain wore corsets. Behind them was a stone wrapped in flesh. In spite of which, or, perhaps, precisely on that account, he kept mothers awake and brought their daughters dreams. He had other accomplishments. He played on the violin so deliciously that he might have been born with one in his mouth. He was good at chemistry and good at quoits. His conversation was jeweled. Voltaire was not wittier, Diderot not more learned. His familiarity with the past was such that it enabled him to speak of King Arthur as though he were his first cousin, and of Charlemagne as though they had been jilted by the same woman.

His resources were as enigmatic as his age. Without anything so ma-

terial as a rent roll he lived magnificently, entertained royally and always paid cash. When he gambled he had the tact to lose. He had the tact and, what is more, the ability to please. The mystery of him bewitched a monarch. But that was child's play. He bewitched gems. He made little diamonds big. He bewitched women. He made dowagers demoiselles.

A man lives as long as he desires, a woman lives as long as she is desirable. A princess whose desirability was declining asked his aid. He gave it in a phial, the contents of which he told her to drink on the morrow. The princess took the phial home, remarked to Radegonde, her maid—a respectable person of forty—that it contained a remedy for cramps, and went to bed. During the night, Radegonde, who had supped on lobster, and who, in consequence, was somewhat incommoded, turned to the phial for relief. In the morning, when she appeared to dress my lady's hair, the princess cursed her as only a princess can curse and rang for Radegonde. "But I am Radegonde," the poor thing expostulated, and as a matter of fact so she was, only, instead of being a respectable person of forty, the cramp remedy had turned her into a soubrette of sixteen.

The *Gazette de France* states that all Paris exclaimed at the miracle. The *Gazette* adds: "Mais M. le Comte de Saint-Germain était parti." We won't attempt to follow him. It would take too long. We won't attempt to explain. It would take too long also. Besides, we lack the ability. The point is, that thirty years later, when he concluded to die—and for no other reason, apparently, than, as he said, because he was tired of living—the Landgrave of Hesse, whose guest he had been, took his papers, which he punctiliously and privately destroyed. Among them was the secret. It had come from Flamel.

Flamel was a scrivener, poor as a rat, but much more honest. His table was set between the pillars of the Church of Saint-Jacques. For the privilege he paid eight sols parisis a

year. The amount, though small, was hard to make. To enlarge his business he set up a book-shop. There, presently, a stranger appeared with a manuscript. It was beautifully illuminated and profoundly abstruse. Flamel, unable to make head or tail of it, bought it just for that reason. He not merely bought it, he paid for it.

A man who buys a book which he can't read is a bibliophile. A man who buys a book and omits to pay for it is a bibliofilou. These definitions help to a better understanding of Flamel. The understanding will be improved when it is added that every leisure moment he gave to a study of the manuscript. For years he devoted himself to it. First the tail appeared, then a glimmer of comprehension; finally, when, after inordinate vigils, the full light was his, precisely as Monte Cristo he could have cried, "The world is mine!"

Flamel had discovered how to get rich and, incidentally, how to grow young. In the "Traité des Lavures," a work which he left and which is still on view at the Bibliothèque Nationale, he expresses his pleasure as follows: "It was about noon, on a Monday, that I succeeded. But truly I tell here a secret which thou shall find rarely written. Yet please God that all may make gold and youth at will, and, after the fashion of the sainted patriarchs, lead fat cattle to pasture."

That is all very well as far as it goes. But it does not go far enough. It never gets to the secret. Yet there was one. There must have been one. After that Monday noon, Flamel, whom the payment of eight sols had previously burdened, became prodigal in philanthropy. He established fourteen hospitals, laid out seven cemeteries, endowed a dozen churches and built as many chapels. Some of them are Objects of Interest still. More than that, their origin and endowments are matters of record. What is yet more interesting is the fact that, several centuries later, just previous to the apparition of Saint-Germain, it was currently reported and gener-

ally believed that Flamel, amazingly young, outrageously rich, yet no longer philanthropic, was filling other cities with the uproar of his debauches. Whether or not it was he who, under the name of the Vicomte de Bellamy, erupted in Venice and, as the Duc de Betmar, entertained Baron Stoch at Lisbon, is a detail. Were we writing fiction we should assume it to be a fact. The point is that he really did have a secret which others succeeded in sharing. There was Talbot, for instance; there was Lascaris and, last and least, Cagliostro.

These people all know a little more than the rest of us. Among other things, Talbot knew how to forge. But not how to do so undetectedly. As a result, he hid in a Welsh hamlet. The innkeeper there showed him a bit of parchment and an ivory ball. Both had been taken from the tomb of a bishop. The latter had been suspected of being rich. He was suspected, too, of having concealed his riches in his shroud. As a result, the tomb was rifled. Only the parchment and the ball were found. This booty the innkeeper had acquired in exchange for a mug of ale. Talbot offered a guinea. Already he had discovered that the parchment was a recipe for the manufacture of money. The guinea accepted, Talbot, who had his reasons for avoiding London, got to Germany, got to work, and, what is more notable, got gold. He projected it as a hose projects water. He waded in it. Everyone who came near him did likewise. He turned pebbles into coin as readily as we turn paper into copy. But it was the contents of the ivory ball, a white powder, that did the trick. Though he could read the recipe, he could not compound it. When the powder gave out, so did his money.

But no matter. There was another and a more capable person about just then. Who he was and what he was never have been and, now, never will be known. He did not float. He was not fluid. But he appeared, disappeared, reappeared, changing in these changes everything, even to his

appearance. Without age, without identity, his presence, more often suspected than perceived, persisted for a century. He had as many names as Vishnu, perhaps as many avatars. Of his names the most certain is Lascaris. Of his avatars the most palpable is prelacy. He entered history clothed with the dignities of a Lesbian Archimandrite. Whether he brought with him gusts of those songs which blew through Mitylene, one may surmise and never know. But this is clear: The multiple and sufficiently attested transmutations which he effected were accomplished either through the medium of previously trained adepts, or, when personally conducted, were produced for purposes entirely altruistic.

In a village at nightfall a stranger appears. He has come unawaited, as death and thieves do. He enters the poorest home, asks for old iron, turns it into gold, and evaporates. It was his custom and his poetry. Someone who knew what poetry was said: "On the morrow he was sought, but he had vanished like the holy apparitions which sometimes visit the heart of man."

The apparition that succeeded him was more tangible, more brilliant, more real. Carlyle used his worst ink to dirty it. But Time has its revenges. Carlyle is handsomely bound and never read. The memory of Cagliostro is immortal. Born without scruples, he omitted to acquire any. A cheerful disdain of righteousness is highly conducive to fame. People more censorious than ourselves regard that disdain as conducive to infamy. It may be so. But in the spaciousness of the perspectives of history you can't tell t'other from which. In lieu of scruples Cagliostro had charms, which is more than can be said of Carlyle. He knew all languages, including the latter's dialect, which was a feat in itself, and including silence, too, for silence is a language also. He had other accomplishments more surprising still. He knew how to make his clients believe anything they wished. He knew how to make

the dead appear in mirrors and the quick in carafes. He knew how to turn ugliness into beauty, age into youth, hemp into silk, and lead into gold. He knew how to be two thousand years old. He knew how to hide beneath the plumage of a peacock, the beak and talons of a bird of prey.

Charming and cruel, he could captivate and coerce. One of his conquests was Louis XVI. By royal edict it was treasonable to speak ill of him. A greater conquest was Paris. Released from the Bastile, where he had been put because of that tiresome old story of the diamond necklace, festivals were given, streets were illuminated, Paris went mad. Boulogne did, too. When he took ship there, five thousand people implored his benediction on their knees. His release was felt to be a blessing, his departure a curse. The multitude called him the Benefactor of Mankind—big words which he rewarded by foretelling the fall of the Bastile. He foretold what would occur the following week, the following month, the ensuing year or ten years later in Madrid, in Vienna, in Pekin. He foretold everything, except, indeed, that the Seer of Chelsea would write him down and the SMART SET write him up.

Clairvoyance has its limits; so, too, has cheek. Cagliostro possessed both, and with them a secret—that of not having any, and yet appearing to have one.

It is the greatest of all. His predecessors, Flamel & Co., were more inventive. Their discoveries are lost, thank fortune, yet—barring the probable—everything being possible, science may find them again, and perhaps, too, the ability to radiate that atmospheric seduction which Bloomsbury calls the *je ne sais quoi*.

We hope not. Smartness, restricted to the few, now disturbs the many. With a different kettle of fish the words of Flamel would be fulfilled. The possession of youth and gold would be universal, the pasturing of cattle ditto. That is not a consummation to be wished. Though smartness and its appanages would then be common, human nature, being invariable, would remain unchanged. People would want, as people have ever wanted, just what they have not got. Instead of trying to be smart, everybody would succeed in being stupid. Youth and its loveliness would no longer allure and poverty be the world's desire.

In view of which, but particularly in view of this periodical, we hope that, should Science happen on the little secret, she will follow the precedent of the Landgrave of Hesse and punctiliously and privately destroy it. However the middle classes may feel, it would be extremely distasteful to us to have an adoration of the Fatted Calf usurp the worship of the Golden.



CONTRAST

A DAISY in my garden grows,
 Lovely and white and cold;
Nor ever pain of passion knows
 Within her heart of gold.

A rosebush close beside her stands,
 His heart a perfumed fire,
His bending branches—pleading hands—
 Outstretched in love's desire!

GEORGE HAWTHORNE SMITH.

ONCE 'ROUND THE LINKS

I MET him first at a Winter hotel. He was an elderly man.

We sat at the same table, and after breakfast we strolled out on the piazza together to enjoy the view of the distant mountains.

A fellow with his kit of golf tools was just starting to work. His knickerbockers, his golf stockings, his scarlet coat and his air of elation made him a marked man.

My new-found friend ejaculated inarticulately, and then said:

"Of all the asses in creation, the one whose ears are the longest and whose bray must be the loudest is the golf player. My boy is fifteen. If he came to me and asked my permission to let him either play golf or drag a toy green watering-cart all around town by a pink string, I'd say: 'My boy, if you are in possession of your senses, drag the watering-cart by the pink string, but if you dare to play golf while I live I will alter my will in your sister's favor.' To think of a big, able-bodied man walking slowly after a clay ball for a whole day, and being so all-fired lazy that he makes a poor little chap carry his bats, or racquets, or whatever you call the foolish things they whish through the air! It's ridiculous. The golf player of to-day will be the imbecile of ten years hence. In fact, he is an imbecile to-day."

Here a golf woman came out, and, proving to be an old acquaintance of my chance friend, she plunged into golf language, and I chuckled to myself and left them together.

The second time I met him was six weeks later, at the same hotel.

When I saw him I could hardly credit my eyesight, for he was rigged out in full golf regalia and carried a leather bag filled chock full of every

style of club the manufacturers have been able to invent up to date.

He nodded and said:

"I remember your face, but your name escapes me."

I caught my name for him, and he said, with enthusiasm:

"Do you play golf?"

"I don't play golf," said I, simply.

He seized my hand in both of his, and his aged eye glowed with a youthful spark.

"Man, dear, you're wasting precious time as long as you remain ignorant of the finest sport since Adam left the Garden. I haven't played very long, but I'm in a fair way to neglect my business altogether, and my partner actually talks about dissolving partnership. Ah, but he can't dissolve the fun I have chasing that will-o'-the-wisp of a ball! Why, man, six weeks ago I was irritable, depressed, mad with my liver. Today my liver and I are bosom friends. And all because a woman whom I know induced me to go around the links once. She knew it would be impossible to go around once and stop at that. I sent my son a cheque this morning—he's away at boarding school—and I told him to buy the whole paraphernalia and join a club, or I'd disinherit him. And when he comes home at Easter I'll play him off his feet. Why, I'm good for a ripe old age now, and I don't care if I neglect my friends, my business—everything—as long as I can toddle around the links. I believe I play a good game of golf, and I believe that golf is a good game to play. That's my creed. Come around the links just once."

I don't play golf. (I didn't go around the links.)

CHARLES BATTLE Loomis.

A MODERN CHILD

By Julien Gordon

(Mrs. Van Rensselaer Cruger)

SCENE—*Piazza; hammock. Elderly lady; little girl.*

LITTLE GIRL (*sighs*)

“Oh, dear me, I wish I had somebody to swing me!”

ELDERLY LADY

“I wish I could, my dear, but I am tired.” (*Pause.*)

LITTLE GIRL

“Do you think it would tire you very much to swing me?”

ELDERLY LADY (*smiling, aside*)

“What a funny little thing! (*Aloud.*) You see, my child, I have rheumatism in my arms.”

LITTLE GIRL (*without conviction*)

“Ah!”

ELDERLY LADY

“When you get to my age you will have it too, perhaps.”

LITTLE GIRL

“Are you very old?”

ELDERLY LADY

“Not very. Do I look very old?”

LITTLE GIRL (*politely*)

“Oh, not so very. Old Mrs. Victor, in the village, looks much older; she is ninety-eight.”

ELDERLY LADY

“I once was as pink and white as you are.”

LITTLE GIRL (*still unconvinced*)

“Fancy!” (*Pause.*) “Have you got any children?”

ELDERLY LADY

“I have six children.”

LITTLE GIRL

“Why did you have so many?”

ELDERLY LADY

“Why? H’m!—God sent them to me.” (*Pause.*)

LITTLE GIRL (*reflectively*)

“Can God make mistakes?”

ELDERLY LADY

“Why, of course not. What an odd idea!”

LITTLE GIRL

“Well, He can, then, or else He did not send me.”

ELDERLY LADY (*interested*)

“Why, what do you mean?”

LITTLE GIRL

“I heard mamma tell Mrs. Lawrence that she did not want to have me; that I was a mistake.”

ELDERLY LADY

!

LITTLE GIRL (*wriggling and turning over in the hammock*)

“Have you got a husband?”

ELDERLY LADY (*sadly*)

“No, dear; not any more. My good husband died nineteen years ago.”

LITTLE GIRL (*cheerfully*)

“Then you are a widow?”

ELDERLY LADY

“Yes.”

LITTLE GIRL (*blinking, in a whisper*)

“Is it for him (*wags her head*) you still wear black?”

ELDERLY LADY

"Yes, my child. I shall always wear it."

LITTLE GIRL

"I wouldn't, then. Aunt Molly only wore black a year for Uncle Minus, and now she has got another."

ELDERLY LADY

"Your Aunt Molly was a very young woman, and—" (*Pause.*)

LITTLE GIRL

"Can widows have children?"

ELDERLY LADY

!

LITTLE GIRL

"You have got six."

ELDERLY LADY

"They are all grown up and married."

LITTLE GIRL

"Are they girls?"

ELDERLY LADY

"Four girls and two sons."

LITTLE GIRL

"Are the girls pretty?"

ELDERLY LADY

"I think them so."

LITTLE GIRL

"Have they got children? Are they brides? I have always noticed brides have a baby."

ELDERLY LADY (*laughing*)

"Yes; I have grandchildren to love."

LITTLE GIRL

"I heard mamma saying the other day to Mr. Lawrence she wouldn't mind being a widow one bit; it was a pleasant position. That's what my ma said."

ELDERLY LADY

"Your mamma must have been joking."

LITTLE GIRL (*doubtfully*)

"I don't know."

ELDERLY LADY

"Are you going to the dance at the Lawrences'?"

LITTLE GIRL

"Sister May is. I'm too young."

ELDERLY LADY

"I thought children were to open the ball."

LITTLE GIRL

"Not as little as I am. Sister May always gets everything."

ELDERLY LADY

"She's grown up nearly, isn't she?"

LITTLE GIRL

"She's sixteen. She's got a bicycle."

ELDERLY LADY

"Most dangerous things! Do you want one, too?"

LITTLE GIRL

"I am dying for one. Do you ride?"

ELDERLY LADY

"Why, my child, what a question!"

LITTLE GIRL

"I should think you would want to."

ELDERLY LADY

"One doesn't want to do such things when one is old."

LITTLE GIRL

"I wish I did not want to do things."

ELDERLY LADY

"But that would be unnatural. Age has few desires; that is one of its compensations."

LITTLE GIRL

"Oh, what is that, comp——?"

ELDERLY LADY (*gravely*)

"When one wants to do things very much, and can't, that is suffering; when one doesn't want to do them, there is no pain in being disappointed. Do you see?"

LITTLE GIRL

"Well, I am just suffering for a bicycle."

ELDERLY LADY

"What a queer little girl! Won't your papa give you one?"

LITTLE GIRL

"Oh, he would, but ma won't let him; she doesn't want him to spend the money."

ELDERLY LADY (*turning the subject*)

"At your age I went to dancing school. Do you?"

LITTLE GIRL

"Yes. I hate it."

ELDERLY LADY

"Why, we liked it better than anything." (*Pause.*)

LITTLE GIRL (*contemptuously*)

"Did you have boys? Ours is all girls."

ELDERLY LADY

"All girls!"

LITTLE GIRL

"Yes. We dance together. I hate boys."

ELDERLY LADY

"Why, I used to like my little beaux. My heart quite fluttered when they asked me to dance many times."

LITTLE GIRL (*starting*)

"Why?"

ELDERLY LADY

"I had no brothers; I was unaccustomed to boys; they were something new, don't you see."

LITTLE GIRL

"I think they are stupid—boys."

ELDERLY LADY (*reminiscent*)

"And after I grew older we had delightful dances at the different houses, and our little flirtations—quite harmless—"

LITTLE GIRL

"I guess people don't have them any more; it makes 'em tired."

ELDERLY LADY

"Don't have what?"

LITTLE GIRL

"Those things you spoke about. Sister May don't; she's all for wheeling."

ELDERLY LADY

"And a very unwomanly amusement, I think." (*Pause.*)

LITTLE GIRL

"Mamma wheels. I mean to wear tights."

ELDERLY LADY (*incredulous*)

"Your papa will hardly permit that."

LITTLE GIRL

"I guess he won't be able to help it, then."

ELDERLY LADY

! . . . "In my day, little girls obeyed their parents."

LITTLE GIRL (*growing confidential*)

"Sister May told me yesterday that was played out."

ELDERLY LADY (*aside*)

"I'm glad my girls are safely at anchor."

LITTLE GIRL (*sharply*)

"What?"

ELDERLY LADY

"Nothing." (*Pause.*)

LITTLE GIRL

"Do you know my mamma?"

ELDERLY LADY

"Slightly."

LITTLE GIRL

"Do you think she's pretty?"

ELDERLY LADY

"Very pretty."

LITTLE GIRL

"I heard Mr. Lawrence telling her the other day she was beautiful, and he kissed her hand."

ELDERLY LADY (*severely*)

"Mr. Lawrence, I have been told, is a great flatterer."

LITTLE GIRL

"What?"

ELDERLY LADY

"Flatters young women."

LITTLE GIRL

"My mamma isn't old, is she?"

ELDERLY LADY (*smiling*)

"Not at all."

LITTLE GIRL

"He said she looked as young as sister May, and was prettier."

ELDERLY LADY

"Eh?"

LITTLE GIRL

"And ma said, 'I am only seventeen years older.'"

ELDERLY LADY

"Is that all?"

LITTLE GIRL

"It seems a great deal."

ELDERLY LADY (*reminiscent*)

"Your mamma must have been annoyed. I remember a man paying me compliments, a gay bachelor, when I was about her age, at a ball, and I was very angry and ran for protection to my good husband."

LITTLE GIRL (*with wide eyes*)

"Why, what could that bachelor have done to you?"

ELDERLY LADY (*blushing violently*)"It was an impertinence. (*Impressively.*) A married woman desires only the adoration of her own husband; for him she dresses, makes herself beautiful—"LITTLE GIRL (*incredulous*)

"Ma is not like that, then."

ELDERLY LADY

"Like what, my dear?"

LITTLE GIRL

"I guess she was not afraid. She did not run to papa. She said, 'Hush! Harry may hear you; don't be silly.' She looked pleased."

ELDERLY LADY (*aside*)"What an atmosphere! Poor child!"
(*Pause.*)

LITTLE GIRL

"It's Sunday to-morrow; are you going to church?"

ELDERLY LADY

"Not to-morrow. One of my sons is arriving early."

LITTLE GIRL

"Have you, then, no religion?"

ELDERLY LADY (*much shocked*)

"Why! My child! Religion is my chief consolation."

LITTLE GIRL (*kindly*)

"Are you always sad because your husband is dead?"

ELDERLY LADY (*simply*)

"Yes, my dear."

LITTLE GIRL (*gently*)

"I'm sorry."

ELDERLY LADY (*affectionately and tearfully*)

"You are a sweet child. Do you go to church?"

LITTLE GIRL

"Not much."

ELDERLY LADY

"What?"

LITTLE GIRL (*very loud*)

"I said, not much; we never go to church in Summer. I have no one to take me but the servants, and they are Catholics."

ELDERLY LADY

"Well, but—"

LITTLE GIRL

"Papa goes to the Casino, and ma shampoos her hair Sundays, and in the afternoon—"

ELDERLY LADY

"In the afternoon—"

LITTLE GIRL

"She bicycles with Mr. Lawrence. She takes me to church in Winter, but in Summer she says it is too hot and that the sermons are stupid."

ELDERLY LADY (*scandalized*)

"And what do you do all day?"

LITTLE GIRL

"I take a sea bath with sister May, when she isn't cross."

ELDERLY LADY

"If I stopped for you, would you go to church with me some Sunday?"

LITTLE GIRL (*turns over in the hammock and flops*)

"Perhaps. Papa says there is nothing in religion, anyhow."

ELDERLY LADY (*almost shrieking*)

"What?"

LITTLE GIRL

"I heard him talking with Uncle Charlie. He says fate is everything."

ELDERLY LADY (*ruminating*)

"Fate is a harsh master."

LITTLE GIRL

"He says we can believe anything we like when we get big. He says he won't force us to be religious. He says his mother whipped him once for not going to Sunday-school, and he hates religion worse than poison ever since."

ELDERLY LADY

"She made a mistake."

LITTLE GIRL

"But we go in Winter. I guess my parents think religion isn't necessary in warm weather."

ELDERLY LADY

"Ah!" (*Pause.*)

LITTLE GIRL

"Did you ever see the Queen?"

ELDERLY LADY

"Yes."

LITTLE GIRL (*important*)

"Well, I have too, then."

ELDERLY LADY

"Where was that?"

LITTLE GIRL

"At Cannes. She was driving a donkey cart. She had on a big flabby hat tied under her chin with strings."

ELDERLY LADY

"She wears it for shade."

LITTLE GIRL

"Sister May said she was an old frump."

ELDERLY LADY (*with some asperity*)

"She is a very great personage."

LITTLE GIRL

"A very great frump, then."

ELDERLY LADY

"And a good woman."

LITTLE GIRL (*not impressed*)

"Her hat was queer, though."

ELDERLY LADY (*with some curiosity*)

"What do you mean by a frump?"

LITTLE GIRL

"I know, because I asked ma the other day."

ELDERLY LADY

"And what did she say?"

LITTLE GIRL

"Ma said a frump was a person who was perfectly satisfied with herself."

ELDERLY LADY

"Then I am no frump."

LITTLE GIRL (*blandly*)

"I don't know; I think you *look* like one."

ELDERLY LADY (*aside, settling her cap*)

"And I got this gown at Howard's, and paid—"

LITTLE GIRL (*continues in same monotone*)

"Ma says they never learn anything; they don't want to."

ELDERLY LADY

"Did you admire the Princess of Wales more than the Queen?"

LITTLE GIRL (*with melancholy*)

"I never saw *her*."

ELDERLY LADY (*still somewhat bitterly*)

"The Prince, perhaps—"

LITTLE GIRL (*with deeper melancholy*)

"No; mamma has. She knows him."

ELDERLY LADY

"And admires him, no doubt."

LITTLE GIRL

"She said he looked moth-eaten, but had good manners."

ELDERLY LADY

"That is something."

LITTLE GIRL

"Papa *loathe*s him."

ELDERLY LADY (*with affected innocence*)

"Why?"

LITTLE GIRL

"He asked mamma to dine, and did not invite papa."

ELDERLY LADY (*with suppressed excitement*)

"Of course, she declined."

LITTLE GIRL

"No, she went."

ELDERLY LADY (*pleasantly*)

"Was the Princess there?"

LITTLE GIRL

"I guess not. They were in Hom-
burg; it was a dinner of Americans."
(*Titters.*)

ELDERLY LADY

"Why do you laugh?"

LITTLE GIRL (*still tittering*)

"Ma caught it when she came home." (*Coughs and chokes.*)

ELDERLY LADY (*rising and patting her between the shoulders*)

"There! there!"

LITTLE GIRL

"Papa was just boiling."

ELDERLY LADY

"Perhaps your—er—parents would not like you to repeat these things to strangers, my dear."

LITTLE GIRL

"He said the people at the dinner were not nice at all, and he—" (*Titters and chokes.*)

ELDERLY LADY

"I can't see the joke."

LITTLE GIRL (*suddenly serious*)

"I was laughing at what ma said, that he was moth-eaten. How can a man be moth-eaten? I thought it was only curtains. Papa got quieter after she said that."

ELDERLY LADY

"Well, I must be going now. I told Mrs. McPherson I would wait for her here a minute while she stopped at the post-office, and I see her coming across the grass."

LITTLE GIRL (*nods*)

"Good-bye, then."

ELDERLY LADY

"Good-bye, my dear."

LITTLE GIRL

"Ta, ta! Come again."

ELDERLY LADY

"What?"

LITTLE GIRL

"I said come again."

ELDERLY LADY

"You are a quaint little creature. Come and see me over at Taft's."

LITTLE GIRL

"I don't have much time, but I'll try."

ELDERLY LADY

"What do you have to do?"

LITTLE GIRL

"Well, I have to swing in this hammock a good deal, and—and say my lessons to my nurse—sometimes."

ELDERLY LADY

"Do you go to school?"

LITTLE GIRL

"No; we have a class at home in Winter."

ELDERLY LADY

"Do you enjoy it?"

LITTLE GIRL

ELDERLY LADY
"I meant your studies."

"I like anatomy and the natural sciences."

ELDERLY LADY (*impressed*)
"Why, you must be very clever to

like such things; I never studied those."

LITTLE GIRL.

"There are such funny pictures."

ELDERLY LADY

"I must go. Good-bye, little dear."

LITTLE GIRL

"Good-bye. Here goes!" (Sets the hammock wildly swinging.) "Good-bye. I like you."



ATTAR

THE dark rose of your mouth
Is Summer and the South to me;
The attar of desire and dream
Its tendernesses seem to me.

The clear deep of your eyes
A lure of wonder lies to me,
Whereto my longing soul descends
While Love comes by and bends to me.

The hushed night of your hair
Breathes an enchanted air to me—
Strange heats from many a mystic clime
And far-off, perished time to me.

The throbings of your throat,
What madness they denote to me!—
Passion, and hunger, and despair,
And ecstasy, and prayer to me.

The dusk bloom of your flesh
Is as a magic mesh to me,
Wherein our spirits lie ensnared,
Your wild, wild beauty bared to me.

The white flower of your feet,
How sacred and how sweet to me!—
From some close-hung and censer'd shrine
Borne to make life divine to me.

CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS.

THE PIPES OF PAN

SYLVAN GLADE. *Noon. Pan discovered reclining on mossy bank, in evening dress, toying with silver pipes. Nymph reclining at his feet. Other Nymphs, Fawns and Satyrs in background.*

NYMPH. Pipe for us, Pan, the sun is high, I ween—
 PAN. Go to!
 NYMPH. We fain would gambol here upon the green.
 PAN. Nay, gambol not at all, say I, alack,
 Upon the green, or on the red or black.
 NYMPH. But surely have the learnèd poets writ
 (And we could have no better sense nor wit)
 That when our Pan upon his pipes may play
 The wood-folk all must gambol, some old way.
 PAN. Forsooth, and I recall, also, full well,
 'Tis not the only foolish thing they tell.
 I've heard full oft that he who'd dance to-day
 Must afterward the merry piper pay.
 I've piped and piped, until my heart has bled,
 And for it all I've not received a red.
 NYMPH. But how about the poet's "dull, dull care?"
 PAN. His "fleeting hours," and "scented Summer air?"
 All hocus—stuff! They've sung themselves all dry,
 And, by the token! so, methinks, have I.
 We're not in poets' times; I'll change it all
 And pipe at Mrs. Leo Hunter's ball.
 A hundred pounds I'll charge her for the play,
 Which I am confident she'll willing pay.
 'Tis such a card to have me on her string
 That I am sure I any price can bring.
 NYMPH. But would you leave me, Pan, and go to town,
 Without a shilling? See, I need a gown—
 PAN. The music halls might take you for a show,
 Provided you have nowhere else to go.
 NYMPH. Good-bye!
 PAN. Come, don't be soft. Give me your hand.
 I fear you really don't quite understand.
 'Tis not so jolly bad as it would seem—
 We'll break for vaudeville, and form a team.

ALBERT HARDY.



THE PROBABLE REASON

MRS. HOON—Why do you suppose she insisted on being married in a balloon?

MR. HOON—I don't know, unless it was because she thought no man on earth was good enough for her.

IN THE KING'S CHAMBER

By Eden Phillpotts

THE first wonder of the world lay under Spring sunlight, and along its terrific terraces, torn bare by five thousand years of time and man, hot air glimmered, and lizards, with something of mystery in their golden eyes, here squatted motionless, here vanished, to reappear in unexpected places. Aloft upon the eastern slope of Cheops's Pyramid sat two men, dwarfed by their position into the semblance of gaudy birds. Behind them rolled the Libyan Desert; beneath them crouched the Sphinx, dwindled to a hare in its form; beyond, again, like a cluster of old bee-hives among cabbage stumps, stood the mud walls and gray thatches of Kaffra under date palms; while across green leagues of valley where waters wound, where flowering mustard scattered little lakes of flame through the lucerne and darker foliage of acacia indicated the roadway, old Nile twinkled his shining silver and Cairo rose in pomp of a thousand minarets and domes, like a mirage of pearl gleaming remote against the azure and gold of Egyptian noon.

Ismail Kolali, Sheik of the Gizeh Pyramids, rarely of late years had clambered to his present lofty station. His duties lay at the foot of the giant, and there he controlled his guides, took toll of travelers, made money and thanked Allah that a ceaseless stream of infidel gold poured daily into the deep pockets of the faithful. But seeking a meeting-place beyond human ears, he had ascended the northern angle of the Pyramid and now sat aloft at a spot where weary climbers are wont to rest a while, to

bathe hot hands and faces and listen to local lies.

The Sheik reclined with his henna-stained nails in his beard and his dim eyes upon the village below, over which he also ruled. His outer robe was of the color of the desert, where long years without a footfall have turned the face of the tawny sand to gray; beneath it shone a garment of fierce red, while his green turban marked Ismaïl of the chosen who had seen Mecca. Beside him, clad in white, with a crimson fez on his curly hair, sat Omar Othman, the champion guide, the man with muscles of steel, who could reach the summit of Chafra's Pyramid and return a minute quicker than any of his fleet fellows. His brown eye was bright, his head clear, his horny feet surer than a mountain goat's. Born in the shadow of the Pyramids, Omar's life had passed within sight of them; and from the ebony darkness of the royal tombs to the shattered summit, he knew the monster of Cheops in all its cryptic ways as none knew it but the bats, the jinn and the spirits of dead men.

Rumor asserted that from the recesses of the Queen's Chamber there ran a passage where none but a serpent might pass; and those who loved not the quick-footed Omar declared that he had sold himself to Iblis, and, in guise of the desert snake, was permitted to penetrate a treasure-house hidden, according to tradition, at the roots of the Pyramid. "As a snake he goes and so returns," said Hassan Othman, Omar's own brother and worst enemy. "The treasures of the Great Dead One are not for him, yet

such his lust after gold that he has sacrificed Paradise for the sight of them."

But Sheik Ismaïl, as became a man of broad mind, who had been to Mecca and knew the value of money, slighted such fables and blamed those who spoke them as men jealous and, therefore, prejudiced. In Omar he saw much to admire, for the guide's good temper and astounding ability made him a favorite with visitors and won rich store of backsheesh. In fact, Omar was far too good a Moslem and man of business to make so poor a bargain with Iblis as that attributed to him; and when, therefore, the young guide, who had thus far enjoyed but one wife, began to desire a second, Sheik Ismaïl was well pleased that his youngest daughter, Fâtimâ, should be the object of Omar's hope.

"Ripe for marriage she is, in truth," said the old man, with his eyes on the little dwelling below that held her. "No houri of the High Heaven excels my child in form, or music of voice, or soft bounty of bosom. It is most true also that her eye shines like the evening star at your approach, and grows dim when you leave her, even as the star pales at night's departure. And yet—"

"Fear not for the greatness of my gifts, my father."

"It is not that. You have enough. My mind runs on Rehana, daughter of the Syrian, your wife."

"What matters this to Rehana?"

"Her words come to my ears. She is not devout in the faith."

"There is a blight upon her mind. Rehana was brought up, as so many of the Syrian girls, by white-faced women from the Occident in their Christian schools."

"I know it; and the poison sucked up while yet her mind was milk is not yet purged away."

Many Syrian maidens learn to read and write, to cast figures and use the needle in these mission homes. They are also instructed in the creed of the unbelievers. But their fathers and brothers take them quickly away when they are husband-old—at twelve and

fifteen years. So they go into marriage and forget what they heard, and bear children and justify their existence.

"Rehana has not forgotten," declared Sheik Ismaïl. "She speaks evil words and thinks too much. Consider, if cows and camels should think! These Christians set the woman on a throne; we know her place is not higher than our footstools."

"Rehana utters follies; I heed them not."

"But another woman might do so; and thus you go home from your daily labors to hell. It is fitting, Omar, that one of your substance should wed further. You cannot longer live with dignity before Allah and the people as the husband of one barren woman, and she ill-favored and advanced in years. Yet I would not that Fâtimâ went to a home of strife, of evil-speaking, of infidel utterances."

Omar Othman laughed, and his white teeth gleamed.

"That is to say, I am less than master in my own dwelling! Rehana is spoiled; there are many things another woman will teach her to forget."

"She has spoken with Fâtimâ, and, as I hear them repeated to me, her words are those of one wholly mad. She speaks of spiritual love; of communion between man and woman that rests not on sense or sex, and is eternal; of joys hereafter, greater than Mohammed promises."

"She is mad in part. This is the poison you spoke of—the poison of those dogs who put the Carpenter before Mohammed. It is time she knew me better; and she shall."

"Such vain imaginings must be starved out of her brain or beaten out of her body with stripes."

"My father, who should understand women if you do not? Listen: With a boy's foolish passion I promised her, when first I took her, that no other women should share our life, that I would be even as the Christians in this and marry not again, though Time should bring me a Khedive's wealth. All men laughed

at the folly of hot youth; and I laughed back, seeing not in the shrivelled limbs, the wrinkled brows and the babes at flat breasts that women grow old so quickly. But is this foolishness to be remembered against me now?"

"She will remember it with the jealousy of a deserted tigress. Therefore I almost fear."

"Does Fâtimâ fear, too?"

"Not so. Yesterday at eventide, returning from the well, they had speech, and Rehana's viper tongue woke a fire ready enough for the kindling. Fâtimâ is a Sheik's daughter."

"And shall be my wife if you will. The people must laugh at me no more."

"Having faith in your strength, I say 'Yes.' See! A cavalcade! Help me to descend."

Far below, two vehicles, like black flies, crawled out from under the acacias to the base of the Great Pyramid, and a rainbow-colored crowd quickly closed upon them. Yelling guides, jabbering boys, rascally sellers of rubbish, counterfeit coins and sham gods swooped upon the newcomers; men clamored and bawled and fought for possession of them; camels came striding from the Sphinx and squatted before possible riders; deformed beggars thrust withered stumps of vanished limbs into their faces, and the eternal cry of the East, like the ululation of hungry jackals, rose upon the hot air from a hundred throats: "Backsheesh! Backsheesh! Backsheesh!" Then, down into the turmoil and dust and glare, hastened Sheik Ismail Kôlali and his companion.

"We will speak of this great matter after the Fast is over," said the elder man.

"Lapse of time between thought and deed is not always good," answered the younger. "To make long delay is to affront Fâtimâ, the light of my heart, the first jewel of my life."

So they reached the earth, and Grey-beard, scattering the vociferous fellâheen with a word, bid Omar and

two others wait upon the dazed tourists and release them from the press of the people.

II

A round moon loomed huge and golden over the blue distances of the desert, then rising, decreasing in size and increasing in splendor, as a diamond that is cut, she touched the habitations of living and dead, painted the tombs of the Kings with a great brightness, and laid like radiance on little whitewashed groves hard by, where slept the fellâheen of yesterday. Magically wrought the moon on palm and thatch; she cast silver sheaves of light into Kaffra's windows; she brightened one chamber where a man and a woman lay and fought with their brains and tongues.

"You are an infidel," said Omar. "For less than this, men have slain their women and come nearer to Allah by a righteous act."

"To lie is a sin, no matter what name your Prophet bears," Rehana answered. "You promised. To have but one wife is a wise thing. Look round you."

"Mohammed taught no such folly."

"But Christ is a great teacher also; and though a Moslem, I know it well. Woman shall enter Heaven, too. She shares the promise with man."

Omar growled, and his wife spoke on.

"He was very good to women, and set them higher than any teacher that came before him."

"And yet I have heard you say he never wedded a wife at all."

"Never."

"What knows a wifeless man of woman's inner heart?"

"He knows as a seer knows. He knew all. And he raised women from the dust. And those who know that must love him."

"The dust is woman's place. Your vanity makes you worship this mad Prophet!"

"He is not my Prophet," she repeated, passionately; "but wisdom is wisdom, no matter what mouth utters

it. Christ was loved of Mohammed and of God, and much that he uttered has brightened the lives of men and women in their dark hours."

"No man can worship two Prophets. Read your Koran closer. You are of the doubters."

"No soul can believe but by permission of God." Those are Mohammed's words."

"So much the more, I say, you are of those that doubt."

"Cannot one God have two Prophets?"

"Must a woman forever ask mad questions? Islamism means 'submission'—that much, at least, you know. Submission: the man to Allah, the woman to man."

"That follows not."

"By the breath of God, but it shall! I am weary of your folly, weary of the laughter of the people. I wed Fátima, the daughter of Ismaïl Kolali, when the Fast is done."

There was silence for a brief while; then the woman in Rehana awoke.

"So be it. That is a plain word easy to understand. Let Gods and Prophets and promises huddle into the pit. We stand face to face—we three—face to face and will to will."

"Will to will!" I could laugh if sleep were not heavy upon me. Have women wills?"

"That is news to you. Live and wait. Before all the dead Gods and the living you will be wifeless ere you wed another wife."

"That threat quickens no pulse. Rest silent now, for I would sleep."

Rehana rose from his side and left him without more words. Albeit she deemed herself a devout Moslem, yet early teachings at the Christian schools in Jaffa were not effaced from this woman's mind; and knowing that Mohammed held Christ only less great than himself, she inclined her heart to the elder Prophet's teachings and sucked secret comfort therefrom until the climax of her life, now at hand. Fiercely she held Omar to his boy's promise; and the thought of Fátima roused within her such jealousy as only waning women know

when the love that once was theirs hovers for flight to a fresher flower. Handsome she still remained, despite old Ismaïl's criticism, but life and marriage had scorched her first freshness, and Time, who flies with cruel speed among the daughters of the Sun, now left her old, though younger than her husband. So is it with Eastern women, whose childhood is but a decade of years, who may find themselves great-grandmothers at five-and-thirty.

Now Omar loved as a Moslem loves, but Rehana after other fashion; so, when she departed, he slumbered immediately, without sadness; but she shed many tears, struggled in the clash of antagonistic faiths and escaped not from her sorrows into sleep until a gray dawn opened golden eyes on Egypt.

III

THE fast of Ramadan, the ninth month, the month of the Prophet's first revelation, reigned over the whole East, and from the time that a black thread could be distinguished from a white at dawn until set of sun, no true believer might break bread, quench thirst, smoke, bathe or smell any sweet perfume. His arduous labors under these conditions soured Omar Othman's temper not a little, and he hardened his heart against his wife daily and suffered a great passion for the Sheik's daughter to dominate his life.

There came an evening on the desert confines when the sun was low, the sand a sea of red fairy gold and Kaffra purple even to its palms under the shadow of the Great Pyramid. Hungry and thirsty folks sat in wearied groups and waited for the great sun to vanish and the Ramadan gun to proclaim the fast ended for that day. Every man and boy held in his hand some stay or sop for wornout nature. Many were ready with wheaten cakes and bunches of fresh lettuce; others held an orange already peeled, and their mouths watered as they waited. Those who

craved the narcotic of tobacco, even before drink, had a cigarette rolled and a match at hand. Then swift twilight fell under a rosy afterglow; a gun echoed sharply from the flank of the Pyramid, lights leaped out on the tiny minaret of the village mosque, and men supplied their needs. Sheik Ismaïl and Omar Othman walked homeward to Kaffra, the elder chewing a few dates, the younger smoking.

"So be it," said Kolali, "after Ramadan; and rejoicings worthy a Sheik's daughter shall mark the time. See! she in our thoughts!"

Fâtimâ herself approached them. She was clad in bright colors and wore a *yashmak* of pale flowered fabric, eyeless, formless and grotesque, the pattern on its faint flesh-tinted ground hideous as the white carnival mask of a West Indian negress or some nightmare of leprosy. Many of the Cairo women similarly conceal their faces and know not the effect such covering produces.

Of Fâtimâ only her little brown hands and bangled wrists were visible. She was fourteen, lithe, strong and well developed every way save in brain. But she adored Omar; and the music of her soft voice set him on fire as often as he heard it.

She brought her father a blood orange, and as the party moved forward their talk touched the future and Rehana.

"The harem is no place for discord," declared Fâtimâ, very wisely, and knowing, as yet, nothing about it.

At the sound of the word "harem," Omar Othman showed a sense of increased importance.

"She will come to understand," he said. "She will never lack for honor."

"But the love is mine. That is Allah's way and will. Women outlive man's love: that I know. Her turn has come and gone. Now it is mine."

"Yet you must not hate Rehana, but see her as Time's glass reflecting yourself, my daughter."

"I shall never look like that, dear

father. I hate her only because she hates me."

"Think nothing of her, Fâtimâ. Who turns or pities the flower that has bloomed and is dead? To each his hour."

"I am as tall and as strong and as wise as she."

"You are of the best that Allah could fashion. Wisdom will prevail. Think, therefore, of Rehana with greatness of heart, as becomes a conqueror. Flout not her wrinkles, for she has been a good wife to the man you love. Who thinks unkindly of a faithful garment grown old and put aside?"

These words spoke Sheik Ismaïl; then he turned aside into a little store wherein were dates and grain and the smell of mingled olive and onion.

Omar and Fâtimâ proceeded on their way to the Sheik's home, and he spoke again to cheer her heart:

"Whatever happens will be best. Meantime, I pray Ramadan may fly quickly, lest I burn away before the end of it."

"Dear one of iron muscles and steel bones! Allah knows what is in my soul for you, Omar Othman; the hairs of your head are each dear to me, and I glory to see you speed up the steeps of the capped Pyramid. For a man's strength is the joy of the woman who worships him."

"You too are strong above the strength of girls."

"And swifter of foot and surer of eye. Oh, that I might scale the heights with you, and so rise nearer the sun!"

He laughed.

"Save your strength for greater deeds, and your speech for another. Here is Rehana in the way."

Clad in the dark blue robe of the fellahs, with a copper necklace about her throat and the usual *yashmak* of black crêpe with metal tube between the eyes, Rehana came. When she saw them her purpose changed, and she waited for them at the turning of two ways. Fâtimâ flung away her cigarette and went a little nearer to the man.

"Her eyes flash," she said.

"You are not strangers, you two," began Omar, boldly; "and each will know the other better after Ramadan. I bid you salute in friendship."

"I would have your love, Rehana, if I may; but I do not fear your hate. Let there be peace between us, for it is a new thing in Kaffra that a man may not be husband to more women than one."

"No man lies twice to a wise wife. I have his oath."

"Gall is not so bitter as your heart!" burst forth Fâtimâ, her voice rising and growing thin as the voice of an angry bird.

"'Tis the honey of Trebizon, rather, that hath made her mad," growled Omar. But the wife towered above them both in the gloaming and stood still as she answered:

"I am not mad. With you, man, I have spoken enough. With Fâtimâ I yet would speak."

"Say on, then. There is nothing I shall answer that Omar may not hear."

"But it is not so with me. Come. He will not fear to trust us together."

"I will go with you. The daughter of Sheik Ismaïl Kolali fears no woman. Farewell, Omar Othman! Be happy. I shall neither give nor get hurt in this."

The guide, glad enough to escape, departed without anxiety, and Rehana led her enemy away from the confines of the village to where a shallow estuary of the Nile wound darkly between muddy banks in the valley. They sat together below the level of the clover fields, and before their eyes, black against the fading western sky, a tethered cow cropped food and a motionless figure sat hard by and waited for the beast to eat its portion.

"Few words will tell my meaning," began Rehana, coldly. "In the lands below the desert horizon, to the north, where the people set Christ before Mohammed or Moses, the men fight for the women, not the women for the men."

"As among birds and beasts, where the male struggles for possession.

Our people know better. They do not fight at all."

"Yet if two women love one man?"

"They can share his love if he wills it so."

Rehana sneered and her eyes shone.

"Uncover your face and look at me. Are you so tame, so content to live a cow's life? It is not so with me. I share no man with another woman. Omar Othman is all mine, or none of mine. My heart is too big to hold less than all the man I love."

"This folly you learned in your distant youth, Rehana, and are too stupid to forget."

"I am not so old—not so old, save in experience and in my brain. I can at least hold what is my own against a child who still remembers the taste of mother's milk."

"Hold your own!" Silly one! You talk as if Omar was your chattel, whereas you are his."

"I am free as you are—not his slave, but his true wife, to fight for him, if I must."

Fâtimâ's passion was rising and the beauty of her face glowed with hate. She made an effort to speak, but Rehana raised her voice and would be heard to the end.

"You boast that you love him next to Allah, and would die for him. I would make no boast; I live only to do him service and lighten the load of his life. We cannot share this man's home. Speak. You are younger and stronger of arm than I. You understand?"

"I understand. It is not the first time that women have fought for a man."

"It will not be the last."

"To death; and she who lives will bear the news to Omar and trust her secret with him?"

"You are quick to meet me."

"And you are a fool, for I have youth and strength."

"My love is the greater."

"It needed only that! Now I long to kill you with all my soul. It is a lie! Your love is withered and scentless as dead jasmines, and his—for you—is lifeless as the mummies."

"He never said so."

"There was no need."

"My love has lasted long. It is proved."

"You will soon take it where the white graves glimmer. It cannot keep your memory green longer than the myrtle branches they strew upon your grave."

"Your courage will prove smaller than your words when we stand face to face presently. Keep silence until the Fast is over, then, when the men depart to the Feast at Cairo, and by night, meet me in the King's Chamber of the Pyramid."

"So be it. There we can cut this knot without fear."

"Till then feed your courage with hate, as I shall."

"Have no fear," said the younger, drawing down her *yashmak*. "Farewell, dead woman."

Fâtimâ rose and went on her way alone.

IV

Two million rising suns have thrown light on the Great Pyramid; the Southern Cross, now vanished forever from the desert horizon, once knew him; the Pole Star he welcomed as a newcomer in Heaven. Yet, despite his vastness, and the wisdom of those who raised him, and his eternal fight against Time, the first cause of his being was vain, and the hollow receptacle of his heart has been empty these many years. There, built of red granite and fashioned with such cunning that the joints of the monster blocks refuse a knife-blade entrance, lies the Chamber of the King; and there, till the crack of doom and the voice of God, Cheops pictured his embalmed royalty as resting through the ages, secure alike against the hand of Time and the wit of man. But the gods of Egypt are dead as those who worshipped them; the marble slope along which that monarch passed to his last resting-place is cut into rough steps and polished by many naked feet; the dust of the great one has vanished, and the rifled sarcophagus knows his bones no more. Here

it still lies empty under the eternal night of the King's Chamber. Only the glare of the guides' magnesium wire from time to time illuminates it, frightens the bats and reveals the pitiful appellations of a thousand fools who have scrawled their names upon the walls.

Here, on a night when the velvet sky was a blaze of many stars and Kaffra slept save for the howl of dogs, two women and Death met together; and even as Rehana and Fâtimâ faced each other, Omar Othman, a candle in his hand, passed upward toward the vault along that steep way that leads thereto. Returning from Cairo an hour earlier than he had designed, he found brief words left for him in that fair writing the Northern missionaries had taught his wife. "Seek my body in the King's Chamber." Thus Rehana wrote, that if she fell her husband might find her.

Lithe, leopard-like, but knowing no deft use of the knife, the women now circled round each other. They were naked to the waist, that their dealings might be the more definite; soft garments lay beside the sarcophagus, while upon its cracked edge four candles burned and threw a half-circle of dim light upon the terrific darkness. Their eyes followed each other; their naked feet made no sound; only quick breathing, with flash of teeth and eyes and a rustle of flying drapery, proclaimed them more than ghosts. Their shadows leaped and dwindled magically, grew vast and sank into grotesque nothingness, peopled the gloom with jinn and demons and dwarfs and the protean monsters of an Arabian Night. Their hearts beat hard, and neither showed fear, but both much desired to live; therefore, caution took the place of skill, their movements were stealthy and they held apart, each waiting her opportunity.

But Chance shortened the battle and Death made quick choice. Suddenly a human cry rolled up the distant stairway—a sound as of one lifting his voice at a venture, and in doubt whether any ear was present to heed his words,

"Stay your hand, Rehana, if yet you live! What madness is this, to rob yourself of life?"

Thus Omar had read suicide into her missive; and now, with cynical slowness, he sought and called his wife, perhaps hoping she heard not.

But at the sudden echoing thus close at hand, one woman—she nearest the entrance—started and turned. Whereon the other, with the instinct of animal contending against animal, leaped to the chance and struck with savage strength into her enemy's side. When the man appeared, therefore, he found two women: he discovered a figure at his feet supporting herself on one arm, another with her back against the sarcophagus, and between them a red knife.

For a moment Omar's hair crept and rose, and his heart stood still; he believed himself in the presence of a freed spirit. Then a groan burst from dying lips, and a voice followed it:

"For you, husband!"

The woman's head bowed low over her wounded side, her arm failed and her body sank down.

"For you!"

She who stood beside the sarcophagus echoed the words. Then Omar gasped and looked from one to the other, and Fátima spoke again.

"I have killed her. One had to die. You helped me to kill her."

He turned, shuddering, to the woman he loved, while Rehana, with a great effort, held out her arms to him. But he saw her not, and her hands fell quickly. She rolled upon her side, and a dimness came upon her eyes as when hot breath touches glass.

"Look behind you. Rehana is dead."

"I cut my foot hastening to save her. My blood darkens the granite with hers."

"My blow fell upon her as she turned to your voice."

"You have no hurt?"

"None of the flesh."

"She bid me seek her body here. She hath indeed slain herself, and Allah knows it."

"This was forced upon me. But now—"

"Robe, and get you home unseen. I will hold the light. The days of mourning are short for those who rob themselves of life."

"I killed her, Omar. All the world is red for me forever."

"Not so. She killed herself. Allah understands; that is enough."

He hid Rehana's fallen weapon in his breast, then picked up the red knife and closed his dead wife's fingers over it.

"Kismet!" he said.



HAFIZ, THE FORTUNATE

IN Bagdad, by the eastern gate,
The lounging beggars tell the tale
Of Hafiz Khan, called Fortunate,
Who dwelt afar, in Bosra's vale.

This Hafiz Khan was not a king;
He had no heaps of treasured gold,
Nor yet did swaying camels bring
For him rare silks of price untold.

He had no friend, he had no foe;
He never left his city's gate;
He never loved, 'tis said, and so
They called him Khan the Fortunate.

CHARLES EDWARD THOMAS.

THE KNOWING MAN

A FABLE

ONCE upon a Time there was a Man who knew it All. He had not had it beaten into his Head by the hard knocks of Experience, nor had he gained it from Ponderous Tomes—he was born that way, and couldn't help it. He had a tall, majestic Brow that nearly filled his Plug Hat, and that was believed by the Casual Beholder to be the repository of Great Wisdom, but in reality it was only a promising site for an Artesian Well.

This gentleman was always willing to concede that Solomon was the wisest man of his Day, but he consoled himself with the Knowledge that that was long before his Time, and at present he was absolutely unique and unrivaled. Thus it will be seen that when Egotism was being distributed he was not hiding behind the Door, but was present with a Large Basket. He did not merely know Something about Some Things, but he knew Everything about Everything. He was not at all miserly with his wisdom, but was ever ready to tell all he knew and not charge a Penny for it. Wherever two or more persons were gathered together discussing any subject on earth, or in the waters under the earth, from Transcendentalism to "Sapho" burlesques, to them would come the Wise Man, poking his head into the midst of the conversation and insisting upon telling them all about it.

He talked with the Unction of a Young Doctor and the Continuity with which the River Oregon used to run on and on in the Poem, and walked with all the Pomposity of a White Elephant; wherefore, by many he was estimated to be a Great Head, for they

wotted not that he was like certain books we often see which have Imposing Exteriors and Sonorous Titles, but are inwardly full of Fatuous Frivolity, being naught but Checker Boards in intellectual disguises. By others, who were wiser in the Ways of the World, he was called a Bore or a Damfool, according to the Habit of Speech of the Party uttering the Criticism.

It finally came to pass that the Public about made up its Mind to whirl in and unanimously elect him to Congress, one-half of the Voters believing that he was the Embodiment of Great Wisdom and would shine in the Halls of the Nation, and the rest having a Burning Desire to get rid of him and put him where he would encounter Others of his Ilk.

But before they could bring their foul purpose to a Focus, another Man who knew it all came to town, and as it happened that he knew it differently from the first Man, the two of them speedily locked Horns in a Heated Discussion. After they had been hard at it till their wearied Auditors had melted away like the B—1 S—w, the Last Goer, a Public Benefactor, locked the door of the room wherein they were pouring into each other the Nine Parts of Speech, and threw away the Key. When a Committee went to investigate next morning, it discovered the two Wise Men lying cold and still on the Floor, each having been talked to death by the other.

MORAL:

From this we should learn that when an Irresistible Force meets an Immovable Body something is bound to happen.

TOM P. MORGAN.

THE CITY SEA

WHEN the brain grows weary of thinking,
 And the hand is cramped on the pen,
 There is rest for me in the city sea,
 Whose billows are women and men.

I go where this sea is rising
 On the coast of Madison Square,
 And the tide sweeps in with its waves of sin
 And virtue and hope and despair.

I bathe in the human ocean
 That surges along Broadway,
 Where the strong waves roar on the brick-bound shore
 And sparkle and laugh and play.

They are mottled with floating driftwood,
 And tangled with weeds and moss,
 And here and there is a sea-flower fair
 That the billows fondle and toss.

I am stirred by the keen emotions
 That surge through this mortal sea,
 And each living wave, whether weak or brave,
 I feel is kin to me.

Oh, ho! for the sea of the city!
 Though it is not deep or broad,
 It is strong and rife with motion and life,
 And each drop is an atom of God.

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.



THE TRUE TEST

WILLIS—Why, Wallace, I've forgotten more than you ever knew.
 WALLACE—That may be, old fellow; but you've never known as much at one time.



COMPLETING THE QUOTATION

THE WILLING WIDOW (*archly*)—Man proposes—

THE BELLIGERENT BACHELOR—Yes, and when he has had time to think it over he wonders how he came to make such a fool of himself.

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED

By H. C. Chatfield-Taylor

MABEL WAINWRIGHT was leaning against an awning stanchion of the house-boat *Lorelei*, gazing at the green muddy waters of the Thames.

Stretching out before her was Henley Reach. Away in the distance extended the tree-lined banks, and beyond, hazy, purple hills rose against the deep blue of the sky, while along the Bucks shore numerous house-boats were moored under the shade of elms and willows, their white awnings and gay bunting brightly marked against the green background. Under the opposite bank eight oars creaked in unison as the sturdy men of the Leander crew, taking a practice spin, swung forward in their boat. Across the water floated the hoarse cries of the coach.

Miss Wainwright's thoughts were for the moment divided between her own appearance and a man. She was dressed completely in white serge, and her sailor hat, tipped jauntily forward in the English fashion, was the cause of some anxiety. She thought that perhaps it might accentuate the slightly turned-up end of her nose, the only feature of her face with which she was not completely satisfied. But dismissing this worry with the gratifying observation that people with turned-up noses are invariably successful in their undertakings, she began to think about the man. She had firmly resolved to marry Captain Cecil Wardour, and all that remained for the accomplishment of this desirable union was the mere detail of a proposal.

That Captain Wardour would propose, and that very shortly, there

seemed no reasonable doubt. To be sure, he was an avowed bachelor, but he was an Englishman, and that made all the difference, at least to her mind. She was not in love with Captain Wardour, but she was nearing twenty-five, and she rather liked him. She thought he would be easy to manage, and then—a mere detail, of course—he was the heir to an earldom. After all, love is merely a distemper, like measles or the whooping-cough, which one must experience before reaching maturity, so Miss Wainwright reasoned. She had lived abroad five years, and fancied herself a woman of the world; her worldly experience, however, had been mostly confined to the pages of French novels.

A flannel-clad man came on deck and sauntered leisurely toward the spot where she was standing. His bronzed face was partly shaded by the brim of a straw hat, which, leaving the eyes in shadow, threw the thin straight nose into relief, while the sunlight brought out the golden tints of his hair and mustache.

Mabel Wainwright looked at the line of bluish hills. She appeared preoccupied. The newcomer folded his sunburned arms and gazed at the girl thoughtfully. A pretty girl is like a delicate bit of Dresden, he thought—beautiful to look upon, but dangerous to play with. Mabel interested him, and he regretted the fact. What if she should become a necessity?

"Well, Captain Wardour," said Mabel, turning round suddenly; "have you made up your mind yet?"

Wardour blushed. He thought this a rather pointed question.

"Made up my mind?—I beg pardon, Miss Wainwright—but what about?"

"About my personal appearance. Do you think me good-looking? You have been gazing at me long enough to find out."

"My dear Miss Wainwright, there are but two classes of people in the world: impostors and fools. The former are mostly pretty women. I confess you have long imposed upon me."

"That is what I should call a complimentary insult."

"The compliment was your due; the insult you invited."

Mabel bit her lip. "Merely because I asked an expression of opinion?" she said.

"Because you demanded a compliment."

"Not at all. I only wanted to test your bravery."

"My bravery!"

"Yes. Any coward can tell a girl she is beautiful; it takes a hero to tell her she is plain."

"Unless, as in your case, the girl is thoroughly aware that she is pretty; then the heroism becomes mere bravado."

Mabel looked full into Captain Wardour's eyes. "Honestly, do you think me pretty?" she asked.

"Much against my will, I am compelled to confess that I do."

"Nonsense! I am sure you are mistaken. Come, analyze my features separately. You will see there is nothing to them."

"Well, I shall begin with your nose," he said, rather brutally.

She colored. "Never mind my nose; I know it turns up, but you needn't call attention to it."

He laughed. "We'll try your eyes, then. I confess I like them; they have a provoking way of looking at one as if you know a great deal more than you are willing to admit. I can't quite make out the color, though. I should call them green, but I suppose you call them hazel."

"I hope there is something which pleases you," she replied, half-angrily.

"I adore your mouth. It is with the greatest effort I refrain from kissing it."

"You are the most impertinent man I ever met."

"And your complexion is perfect. It is too fresh for an American girl. You must have a better digestion than most of your countrywomen."

She received this remark with disdainful silence.

He drew up the folds of his sweater until his big bony hands found the way into the pockets of his flannel trousers.

"Remember, you invited the analysis," he said, apologetically.

She smiled. "I suppose I have only myself to blame," she replied; "but anyhow, I think you are the cheekiest man I ever met. It's real Yankee cheek, too. I would never take you for an Englishman."

"Why not take me for life instead?" he said, looking into her eyes with a merry twinkle in his own.

"Because you don't love me."

"But I do."

"Nonsense; you don't know how to love."

"I know how to love you, but I wouldn't marry you for all the world," he laughed.

"Nobody asked you, sir," she said.

"I wouldn't marry you because I want to keep on loving you."

"No, Captain Wardour; it is because you wish to keep control of your own selfish self."

"Yes, I confess there is something in that. A man makes his own life until he is married, and after that his wife makes it."

"From what I know of the life you have made, Captain Wardour," she laughed, "I should advise matrimony; you couldn't fare worse."

"Fare better or fare worse, that's all there is to it, anyway," he sighed, gazing out on the river. "If marriage were only not such a lottery!"

"Yes, but you forget that, being a blank yourself, you stand all the better chance of drawing a prize."

She grasped the awning stanchion

and rested her face against her hands. Swaying gently to and fro, she gazed at him intently with her big, inscrutable eyes.

Captain Wardour felt the power of that glance. He moved uneasily. He feared he might precipitate an engagement for which he was unprepared, as his military training prompted him to express the matter. "Do you think me absolutely undesirable?" he asked, finally.

"I think you are absolutely selfish. At least, you give one that impression."

He looked into her eyes. "I hope I am not as selfish as you think me," he said. "I should hate to have you think badly of me."

"Then you must do something to alter my opinion," she replied, with a careless toss of the head.

"What?"

"Do some gallant act; risk your life for another."

"But give me the opportunity."

She glanced at the river. The sun was just sinking behind the hazy line of hills; a glow of yellow light was on the water. It looked warm and inviting. She remembered her dress was white and would not run. She took a step forward, and, before he could seize her, plunged headlong from the deck. A scream, a splash; then the water closed over her.

Wardour threw off his coat and prepared to jump. Below him on the gunwale he saw a long boat-hook. An idea seized him. He would pay her back in her own coin, he thought. So, rushing to the lower deck, he seized the boat-hook just as she rose for the second time. In an instant he had fastened it in the loose collar of her skirt and was drawing her, panting, struggling, splashing, to the house-boat. Kneeling down, he seized her arm and drew her out of the water!

The noise of the rescue brought others of the party from the cabin hurriedly. They crowded round the dripping girl, asking innumerable questions.

Mabel was a pitiful object. Her

hat was gone and her pretty blonde curls were flattened out against her head, while the water fell in torrents from her limp skirts and the loose flannel shirt clung tightly to her drenched skin.

She shook herself like a spaniel. Captain Wardour laughed uproariously.

Mabel looked at him and smiled.

"By the way," she said, addressing the others, "Captain Wardour is a gallant rescuer of the drowning; he never risks his own life, and always picks out people who know how to swim."

Wardour plunged his hands into his pockets. He began to wonder whether she had not "scored off him," as his sporting proclivities prompted him to word the situation.

II

CAPTAIN WARDOUR had dismounted to take up a link in the curb chain of Mabel's bridle. Four months had passed since the incident of the house-boat, and they now met for the first time at a meet of the Quorn. He had been suddenly called back to London the morning after his ungallant rescue, so that they had never had an opportunity for a declaration of peace since that unfortunate episode. He was glad that Mabel had greeted him in a friendly manner, as, to confess the truth, he had often thought that she had had rather the better of him on that occasion, and it relieved him to find that she had apparently no intention of referring to his heroic efforts at life-saving.

When he had finished his task he gave the nose of Mabel's hunter an affectionate rub, caught his hunting whip under his arm and looked about him.

The field were variously engaged. Some were smoking a last cigarette, others discussing the prospects for the morning's run; here two women were dissecting the reputation of a mutual friend, and there an anxious sportsman was edging his mount well

to the front and calling forth angry glances from the master. The hounds had dashed into the gorse, and all were eagerly waiting for the fox to break cover.

The sun streamed for a moment through the clouds and drew sparkles from the moist turf and lines of dripping hedgerow. Wardour's lungs inhaled the fresh smell of the saturated pastures. For the moment he was released from the habitual thrall of boredom. He glanced at his companion's face. She smiled. Her white teeth glistened captivatingly under her lips. "That girl is a ripping good sort," he thought.

"By the way, Captain Wardour," she said, maliciously; "water-fowl are not at home on land, so I may put your heroism to a real test to-day. Shall I find you wanting?"

"You find me wanting the opportunity, Miss Wainwright."

"Then you wish me to come a cropper?"

"I wish to redeem myself in your eyes."

The sharp tones of a horn sounded on the clear air. Wardour swung into his saddle, but Mabel was off before him, charging toward the point where a dozen hounds were stealing out of the undergrowth.

He settled himself on his gray and cleared the first stile as closely after her as his tardy start would permit. Over a ploughed field they went, taking ridge and furrow slightly aslant, then jumped the second fence a field ahead of the surging crowd, which was struggling through a gate fifty yards from where the fox had broken cover. He felt the exhilarating rush of the wind against his cheeks. "That girl can go," he thought, as he watched Mabel's hunter sailing away before him.

A stiff "oxer" barred their way. They took it gallantly; then the hounds faltered for a moment. Mabel had cut out a line for herself, so they were alone. She slipped the crook of her whip under a latch, a gate swung open, and away she went over a field of grass. Wardour followed. She

was always before him—exasperatingly before him.

A hedge, another field, and there, where the grass sloped gently to a line of willows, was a silvery thread winding, serpent-like, through the meadow.

Mabel hesitated. Two hundred yards below the master had safely reached the farther bank. One of the field, too, who was well to the front, faced the water; his horse landed safely, made a false step, took a short stride, and was away after the hounds.

The white specks on the farther bank made a slight deflection to the right. "There's a bridge down by that fence," called Wardour. She heard him and led the way to a clump of willows, where a little bridge crossed the brook.

They clattered over the loose boards, but on the other side, not a hundred yards from the water, was a frowning blackthorn hedge, with nothing visible beyond. Wardour shouted a warning, but there was nothing for Mabel to do but take it. She steadied her mount, charged carefully, cleared the hedge, and—disappeared completely. Wardour threw his full weight on the reins and checked his hunter's flight. Springing from the saddle, he ran to the edge of the hedge and looked over.

The horse was floundering in a deep drain. Mabel lay in the mud at the bottom of the ditch. Her hat was gone and the skirt of her habit was torn completely off. The black garments that remained were more appropriate for a dress-reform movement than the present situation. Mabel's face was ashen; she had apparently fainted.

After one hurried glance at the situation he commenced to climb the hedge. Hearing the noise, she opened her eyes in a dazed way.

"Am I disfigured?" she said, faintly. Then, gazing around, she suddenly beheld the state of her attire.

She tried to move, but she was stuck fast in the mud. Captain Wardour was half-way over the hedge. Mabel looked up suddenly and saw him.

"Go away!" she shouted.

"But, Miss Wainwright——"

"Turn round this instant," she cried, in accents that left no excuse for hesitancy.

He obeyed.

"Are you much hurt?" he called meekly over the hedge.

She tried to extricate herself.

"I'm not hurt, but I'm stuck in the mud," she replied, pathetically.

"I must get you out," he said, making another movement toward her.

"You shall not cross that hedge."

The hunter was floundering dangerously. He might kill Mabel at any moment.

"But your life!" he called, anxiously.

"I would rather die than have you see the state I am in."

"It can't be worse than the tumble you took in the Thames."

"Captain Wardour!"

He pulled his mustache excitedly.

"Miss Wainwright, I insist upon coming to your assistance. It is absurd to think of modesty at such a moment."

"Captain Wardour, if you cross that hedge our acquaintance ceases." He paced to and fro, tapping his boot fretfully with his hunting-whip. Then he took a cigarette from his case and lighted it. For a moment he smoked thoughtfully.

Something must be done. The situation was becoming desperate. Finally an idea seized him. He shuddered at the thought. "Well," he sighed, finally, "I'll do it and trust to luck." With a firm step he approached the hedge and, standing with his back to it, he spoke.

"Miss Wainwright."

"Yes," came the reply from the ditch.

"Miss Wainwright—Mabel—I love you. Will you be my wife?"

There was a moment of silence. The hunter struggled in the ditch. At any moment he might crush her.

"Mabel, will you marry me?" he called, anxiously.

"Yes, Cecil," came the faint reply over the hedge.

"Now, as your affianced husband, may I assist you out of that ditch?" he asked, struggling to climb the hedge.

"Yes, dear," she said.

Then she smiled.

III

CAPTAIN WARDOUR was pacing nervously to and fro in the vestry of St. George's church. His big hands were crowded into light-colored gloves, and a white flower adorned the buttonhole of his long-skirted frock coat. From time to time he stopped and muttered to himself, then with an angry gesture strode on again. He was entirely oblivious of the presence of a short, pompous little man with a very red face, who stood there anxiously watching his antics.

Wardour was on the brink of matrimony. The church was filled with people, and he was waiting for the fatal notes of the organ to summon him to his doom. He had been engaged before, three times at least, but he had always managed to wriggle out of the toils before the day set for the execution of his happiness.

Like an atheist, he believed in no future life beyond the grave of his bachelorhood; or rather, he looked upon matrimony as a purgatory from which the only release was death or divorce. To be sure, he had managed to fall more or less in love with Mabel, and she had a most aggravating way of keeping herself firmly planted as a necessity to his contentment. She even stood on an equal footing with his hunters and his yacht, but he was free to sell his hunters, and when he was tired of his yacht he could lay her up or lease her; but a wife could be neither sold nor leased. She would be always with him, a perpetual and awful demonstration of the fact that the human race is divided into two classes, women and fools.

The little man pulled his stubby little mustache, glanced at his watch nervously, then spoke:

"I say, Wardour, old man, you mustn't go on like that."

Still Wardour paced the floor.

"Come, I say, pull yourself together; what's the matter?"

Wardour stopped and glanced at his unfortunate best man. His eyes were heavy, and indicated that the brandy he had imbibed as "bracers" had proved the reverse of effective. He was distinctly in a bad mood.

"Don't speak to me, Monckton; I won't have it."

The little man's face grew redder. The perspiration stood out on his forehead in huge drops. He pulled at his gloves, tore a button off, and said a bad word.

Wardour stopped suddenly.

"Monckton, I shall not be married," he said. "You may send the people away."

"If you don't marry her, I will," said Monckton, sternly.

Wardour took another stride. "I suppose I am an unqualified, unmitigated ass," he said.

"I think you are," replied Monckton, dryly.

"But matrimony is too horrible to contemplate. Gad, I can't do it, Mcnckton! You must get me out of this mess."

"Nonsense, man! You went into it with your eyes open, didn't you?"

"No, I was blinded by her beauty, her fascination."

"And now you want to back down. You are a brute, Wardour," expostulated the little man.

"How do I know she loves me? These Yankee girls are sly ones."

"I'd lay a pony on her heart against a quid on yours."

"Suppose she should insist on having her own way! You know I have always had mine. Gad, I can't think of matrimony without a shudder. I broke off three engagements because I daren't take the plunge."

"Well, it's too late to break off this one. There goes the organ."

"Oh, I say, Monckton, old man, get me out of this. Tell them I'm ill. Say anything, there's a good fellow."

"If you funk you'll be turned out of every club in London. Now brace

up; steady, eyes front, and off we go. There, that's something like it. Remember, nobody looks at you; they all look at the bride."

Wardour finally reached the chancel. With trembling knees and swirling brain he gazed about him. The church swam before his eyes, rows and rows of faces mocking him, hundreds of eyes glaring like so many devils. His mouth was dry and his lips were parched. Cold shivers ran down his back. He felt at that moment that he would pay any price for one more stiff drink. He heard the rustle of many gowns. There was an instant of suspense; then down the aisle he saw a white form approaching. The awful moment had arrived.

Nearer and nearer came the white spectre, wilder and wilder grew his thoughts; his cosy quarters, his collection of pipes, his women friends, his freedom, all faded before that approaching form. He thought of the day in the hunting field, and cursed the unnecessary gallantry that had prompted him to that fatal proposal. He almost wished she had perished in that ditch.

Monckton gripped his hand. "Brace up, old man," he whispered. Mechanically he met his bride. The parson was there in his white surplice. Wardour wondered why he was not in black, with a mask over his eyes. He looked for a gleaming axe.

The clergyman's drawling voice broke the stillness.

"Beloved brethren, we are gathered together here in the sight of God."

Wardour glanced anxiously about: there was no line of retreat open. Vaguely he listened to the preamble about the honorable estate of matrimony commended by Saint Paul, "and conceived by Satan," he wanted to add.

When the clergyman asked if any man could show any just cause why they should not lawfully be joined together, Wardour glanced imploringly at Monckton, but the little man's face was firm, his mustache was stiffer than ever. The parson looked at them sternly, and said, "I require and

charge you both, as ye will answer at the dreadful Day of Judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, that if either of you know any impediment why ye may not be lawfully joined together in matrimony, ye do now confess it."

Wardour tried to speak, but there was a great lump in his throat that choked him. His last chance was gone.

"Wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife," the parson asked, "to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor her, and keep her in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others, cleave thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?"

Wardour hesitated. Once only had that intense fear been in his heart. It was when he charged the rebel redoubt at Tel-el-Kebir. But he had not wavered then.

The clergyman glanced at him impatiently.

"Speak up, old man," whispered Monckton.

Wardour glanced defiantly at the priest.

"No!" he shouted.

"Yes, man, yes!" whispered Monckton, excitedly.

"No!" he repeated, doggedly.

The church swayed before his eyes. There was a scream and the scuffling of feet. A strong hand gripped his arm, and he was hurried away—just how he never knew.

IV

A YEAR later Captain Wardour was strolling leisurely along the promenade at Bognor, seeking some distraction to dispel the drowsiness induced by his surroundings. A dusty road, girted by quiet hostelleries, stretched out before him, and almost at his feet the waves splashed lazily on the beach. It was out of season at that sleepy watering place, and Wardour was regretting that he had run down for the Goodwood meeting a week too soon.

He stopped to gaze at some bare-

footed children playing on the beach, and as each successive wave sent its waters hissing over the sands he became more deeply lost in thought.

Since his unpardonable conduct in St. George's church he had lived to a great extent in retirement. There had been endless gossip about the affair, but as Wardour was heir to an earldom there was more than one mamma of a marriageable daughter ready to discover extenuating circumstances for his heinous conduct. As he discreetly refrained from discussing the matter, and went steadily about his own affairs, he became in time the object of pity and adulation for a multitude of feminine admirers, who felt that he had narrowly escaped the snare of a brazen American adventuress.

But despite the condoning sympathy of the feminine portion of his county, Wardour keenly felt the coldness of many of his men friends, and knew, deep down in his heart, that he had behaved like a brute. He had not seen Mabel Wainwright since the fiasco in the church. He had called the next day, but had been refused admission, so he was unable to offer an explanation of his extraordinary conduct, if any explanation were possible; and as Miss Wainwright and her mother had left for the Continent the following week, all means of reparation had been denied him.

Wardour wished that he could free himself from the sneaking consciousness that he had behaved like a blackguard.

Day by day, hour by hour, during the past year he had brooded over his conduct, and the more he thought of it the more he despised himself. He was thankful that he had escaped matrimony, but he could see no extenuation for his action.

"Well," he said finally, "I wish I could forget that girl. The worst of it all is that I actually believe I care for her—at least, more than for the others."

Then he caught his stick under his arm carelessly, and sauntered along the esplanade.

From the end of the slender pier, stretching far out into the vivid blue channel, floated the discordant strains of the village band.

A score or more of idlers were listening to a medley of music-hall airs, and Wardour, finding nothing more diverting at the moment, passed the turnstile and walked slowly along the pier. Before he reached the musicians they ceased playing and, gathering up the implements of their trade, came toward him, followed by most of the loungers. For a moment Wardour hesitated in his intention of proceeding. But the cool sea breeze blowing landwards seemed to revive his spirits, so he sauntered on to the end of the pier. A girl was sitting there alone, gazing at the sea. Wardour approached at a respectful distance and leaned upon the railing. The girl, attracted by his step, glanced up suddenly. She was Mabel Wainwright.

Wardour's face glowed crimson; his knees trembled; a great lump rose in his throat. He glanced at the sea, then at the long stretch of pier. The sea appeared the more effective line of retreat.

Mabel smiled.

"Yes," she said, "the water is the only sure escape; but I forgot, Captain Wardour does not take kindly to water."

"Mabel—Miss Wainwright, I beg—Oh, what can I say?" blustered forth poor Wardour.

"Don't be afraid," she said. "I sha'n't eat you."

"I sincerely wish you would," he groaned.

She laughed.

"Come here and shake hands. I am not the least bit angry with you."

He approached and extended his hand awkwardly.

"I am so glad you are here," she said, with apparent indifference to the relationship that had once existed between them. "We are here for mamma's health, and it is dreadfully dull. You must walk with us every morning and amuse me."

Wardour looked at her in astonish-

ment. He felt he must say something.

"I thought you were on the Continent," he muttered.

"Oh, dear, no. We have been in England two months. By the way, you are looking extremely well."

"Thanks. I am rather fit."

"I don't like your hat ribbon, though; the colors are too gaudy."

"They are the colors of my old regiment."

"There is too much red to go with the complexion."

He glanced about him nervously. This scene was becoming intolerable. He felt sure that Mabel's calmness foreboded some sort of trouble.

"You haven't paid me a compliment yet," she said, arching her eyebrows. "You might at least say you think I am looking well."

"I say, you know, I always thought you good-looking," he said.

"Did you?" she replied, coldly. "I am glad I had one attraction."

There was an expression in her greenish-brown eyes that made him wince. Finally he spoke, but with much effort.

"Miss Wainwright," he said, "I have long been wishing for an opportunity to offer some explanation, to apologize."

"You refer to our last meeting?" she replied, gazing out over the blue water. "I think no apology is necessary."

"But—"

"It was a mere trifle," she interrupted. "One of those little *contretemps* liable to happen at any time. I had a good laugh over it myself."

Captain Wardour felt more foolish than before.

"I acknowledge I behaved like a brute," he stammered.

"Yes, you might have been a little less brutal about it, I confess—you might have sent Mr. Monckton around to stop me at the door, instead of making me ridiculous before all those people. Not that I minded the result. I really never cared for you, you know, but then—my pride. You know, even a girl has pride about such matters."

"Can I make no reparation, Miss Wainwright?"

"You might, possibly, but then it would be asking a great deal."

"Anything!"

"Except matrimony, I suppose?" she smiled.

"Yes, anything but that. I am sure I should funk again."

"Well," she said, "I won't ask such a sacrifice, but you did play me a shabby trick, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"And you owe me a public apology, or something of that sort?"

"Most assuredly, Miss Wainwright."

"Now, I want you to do this for me," she said, coaxingly; "I want you to let me send out cards for another wedding, and when it takes place I will say 'No.'"

"Do you mean that seriously?"

"Certainly; that would make me quits before the world. Come, make this *amende honorable*, won't you?"

Wardour paced to and fro thoughtfully. He rather liked the idea. It would relieve his conscience.

"By Jove, I'll do it," he said, finally.

V

In the due course of time St. George's church was again filled with expectant people. Owing to the peculiar circumstances attending this second attempt at matrimony the curiosity was intense, and many were the anxious glances cast at Captain Wardour as he and Monckton left the vestry and slowly walked to the chancel. A smile trembled on the bridegroom's lips as he confidently took his place and waited the coming of his bride. He gazed about at his

friends with the consciousness that he was acting a generous part, and when Mabel walked down the aisle on the arm of her uncle he greeted her with a patronizing air intended to inform her that he was there ready for the sacrifice.

During the service Wardour gazed about carelessly. The clergyman's words were robbed of all terror now, and when he was asked the question, "Wilt thou take this woman to be thy wedded wife?" he met the anxious looks of the assembled multitude with a proud, "I will," spoken so distinctly that the words fairly rolled through the church.

An audible sigh of relief ran along the pews. It had been an apprehensive moment for the clergyman.

With a relieved expression he turned to Mabel and said: "Wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou obey him and serve him, love, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others cleave thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live?"

Mabel looked at Wardour. She hesitated. There was a painful silence. Her body swayed, then suddenly—

"I will," she said clearly, firmly.

His face turned white. He trembled violently.

"Say 'no,'" he gasped.

"I will," she replied, with a smile of triumph.

Wardour's doom was sounded. There was no escape. He was now irreverently and irretrievably married.

Strangely enough, however, he never regretted it.



TIMELY PRECAUTION

HE—Why, some day I expect to wake and find myself famous.
SHE—Better set an alarm.

LOVE IN A COTTAGE

I KNEW the case was hopeless, for a butterfly was she,
 And I was nothing greater than a very busy bee;—
 Her time was spent at functions of the highest social scale,
 And mine in writing verses and contriving for their sale.

So knowing how ridiculous a figure I should cut,
 I swore to think of her no more, and tried to leave her—but
 She looked so very trustful and confiding that, forsooth,
 Before I could prevent it I had blurted out the truth.

As at her feet, upon a priceless Persian rug I knelt,
 I told her how unworthy of her merest glance I felt,
 And that, while I would wed her, well I knew it could not be,
 For all that I could own would be a cottage by the sea.

Instead of growing icy, on my head she placed her hand,
 And by her breath of perfume was my pale cheek gently fanned,
 As in my ear she whispered, with a loving little coo:
 “I’m not too proud to share a little cottage, dear, with *you*!

“I’m not the kind of girl who cares for nothing but display,
 And we can be quite happy in an inexpensive way;
 I know you are not wealthy, for you’ve yet your fame to win,
 But if I let *that* wreck our lives, ‘twould really be a sin!

“We’ll get a little cottage down at—Newport, let us say,
 And keep a tiny yacht to take us flying o’er the bay,
 And just a little dog-cart, with a brougham for the rain,
 A span or so of horses, and an auto, neat and plain.

“We’ll practice strict economy in household matters, too—
 Without my maids, Bettine and Miggs, I’ll really try to do;
 One cook, a waitress, chambermaid, a coachman and a groom
 Will be enough to start with—and until we have more room.”

I struggled with the faintness and the chill that smote my heart,
 And told her that, though hers alone, forever we must part,—
 That such unselfishness as this I could not well accept,
 Though as a tender memory its offer should be kept.

She said ‘twas noble of me, and perhaps I *might* be right,—
 Perhaps she wasn’t made with horrid poverty to fight;
 And though that brave, heroic girl I nevermore may see,
 I’ll ne’er forget what she proposed to sacrifice for me!

WALLACE DUNBAR VINCENT.

A DREAM OF THE IDEAL

By Sadie Martinot

OUT of his fancy he wove a spell of moonbeams and cast it about her, and she walked in the web of gossamer and lived in its soft twilight.

And where, before, she had seen but a man, now she saw an abstract being with ethereal attributes.

He had looked into her eyes with the careless intent of creating a passing impression, and the lens of her soul had focused an indelible imprint. The shadow of his image blurred every object upon which she gazed, and she clothed the presence in angelic garb and deemed it the one priceless treasure. And she hugged her phantom close; by day, she felt its atmosphere and influence—by night, it folded its great wings about her and together they soared into the Infinite. An angel in passing might have mistaken her for a sister—so transfigured was her face by the paradise of her dreams.

If, in the morning, an impertinent fly nestled for a moment on her lip, a radiant smile illumined her face as she awoke in response to a seeming greeting.

The look of her eyes became absent and dreamy, and the corners of her mouth curved upward. All day long her gaze was turned within, and her lips wore a beatific smile like unto that of the child who plays at hide-and-seek with the butterflies and the thistledown.

A feathery lightness possessed her, and her movements became instinct with languorous grace. When she moved, she seemed a cloud floating in the ether; when in repose, her attitudes were drooping, pen-

sive. Everything spoke of a fixed idea, which engrossed, absorbed, enveloped her. Her days were waking dreams, and the realities about her were seen through a veil, dimly. . . .

Oh, the exhilaration of the first, faint, indistinct dreams of a new love springing up in the breast! The tiny, pale tendrils take possession of the imagination, and thrive and grow, feeding upon the inarticulate desires of the heart, until the very soul is enmeshed. The whole being feels a sense of weight, and the pulses throb. Yet who would cast aside this burden, for birds are singing in the heart and the imagination is soaring on wings to empyrean heights. Oh, the exquisite pain of thraldom! . . .

Not once did a gleam of doubt flash across her consciousness that the presence would some day be there, clothed in its earthly habiliments—there, by right, there, to stay, there, by her side, forever; for, when he went away, had he not asked her to think of him? And she had kept her promise so well that he had become her religion.

She pleased her fancy by picturing him there near her, now poring over his work, now leaning his cheek upon his hand, lost in thought, while she flitted about noiselessly, straightening things, or made sweet melody, or read, or sewed. She could see herself going up silently behind him, mischievously blindfolding him with her hands, and, when she met with no resistance, softly printing a little kiss upon his neck and going away again about her work, humming like a bird. . . .

And these pictures were very real to her. . . .

She told herself that he was waiting, simply waiting. He was brave and strong, and knew what was best, and how to wait; but the days lengthened into weeks and the weeks into months, and a great wonder stole upon her.

Little by little the lightness left her steps, and she drooped lower and lower. The absent look became a vacant look, and the shimmering gossamer of moonbeams darkened into a dense, amber-colored fog, where wisp-lights danced and danced, and beckoned and beckoned.

One day, just as she had cast his image out from the region of hope, suddenly, without warning, he came to her. She trembled in every limb, and her heart throbbed wildly. That which she had longed for, sighed for, rent her heart in twain for, stood before her. And now a strange thing happened:

As the phantom of her brain had seemed real, so now the actual presence appeared to be an illusion. An impalpable yet impassable barrier reared itself between them, and through this veil she saw an essence, an entity, with a natural endowment of godliness, wasting a magnificent equipment of will power in the compelling of the trivial and worthless. The grosser faults of poor humanity were embedded in the clay of his outward mould, and the weight and insistence of these parasites precluded a noble intellect from a perfect comprehension of its own possibilities. All the force of a great nature was concentrated upon the temporary and the tangible, and she read in him the motives of Mankind, and she saw that the keynote was Self!

An assumed debonair indifference emphasized rather than disguised the self-sufficient complacency which recked little of the joy or sorrow caused the soul now writhing beneath his glance. They talked of commonplaces, but the atmosphere was charged as before an electric storm.

In his eyes gleamed an unmistakable desire, on his lips played a tri-

umphant smile. The moment was crucial. A tense struggle raged between the pride of her enlightened intelligence and the compelling power of his will. A sense of danger oppressed her, and a numbness crept upon her—when out of the distance rang a clarion note, a note poignant with command, a woman's proprietary note, with a long-drawn echo, that intoned his name!

She listened to his retreating footsteps, and each seemed a knell tolling fainter and fainter.

She felt herself upon a desolate and unknown shore; at her feet the waves receded and did not return. A darkness closed about her. In a dim, unconscious way she apprehended that what to her mind should be the apotheosis of a holy ecstasy was to him a mere fact, which his nature strove to neither gild nor adorn. And her heart revolted, and she wept and cried aloud, and voiced the ever-recurring cry of woman: "Why are we condemned to live in this artificial ignorance by the tyrannical law of custom—forced, each one of us, to painfully find reality at the end of many weary, fruitless pilgrimages, the body bent, the spirit broken?"

"Who survives the discovery begins life anew, but too late to make proper use of her knowledge. Why does not our education from childhood enlighten us? Why can we not begin life with our eyes open, and achieve something while we are young, while we have the strength, the nerve, the hope, within us?" . . .

And where she had hugged her phantom she now hugged her sorrow, and she walked forth into the world and looked about her. A calm, steady light flooded her understanding. A new look came into her eyes, and she walked erect, for she saw that she was not alone. On all sides she saw her experience repeated. It was so much the rule that it almost became the law.

And she saw that no one was to blame.

That as it is, it ever has been, and

ever will be; that in proportion to her idealized perceptions, so must be the portion of woman's suffering in disillusion; that the very qualities which in her attract are the instruments by which she is put to the torture; that man and woman, by the

manner of their individual construction, their necessarily different education and experience from the first hour of existence, must look upon all things separately, uniquely. It is the Law.

There can be no perfect sympathy.



TO THE BENEDICT

WHO IN THE APRIL NUMBER LAMENTS THAT HE HAS NOT WED A SHEPHERDESS

I GRANT, O Benedict, that life
 Seems dark, and gloom the spirit fills,
 At that sad moment when a wife
 Has sent one in a dozen bills.
 But, though you think Arcadian hills
 Would prove a refuge from distress,
 Methinks you'd not be free from ills
 If you had wed a shepherdess.

Your high silk hat would, I'm afraid,
 Sit ill on hyacinthine locks;
 That coat, by Poole in London made,
 Be in your way while tending flocks.
 To please *her* you must dress in smocks,
 And surely you could do no less
 Than doff those useless shoes and socks,
 If you had wed a shepherdess.

No printing-press in Arcady,
 The daily news you would not know.
 I fear you would a martyr be,
 Without a club to which to go.
 No skilful chef! No Veuve Clicquot!
 A frugal meal of water-cress,
 Washed down with pure and limpid *eau*,
 If you had wed a shepherdess!

L'ENVOI

Take my advice, and don't repine,
 But think it over and confess
 You're grateful for your Caroline,
 And glad she's not a shepherdess!

LILLI HUGER SMITH.

A WHITETHORN WOOD

O! KING ARTHUR'S court went a-dancing to the Maying,
 'Neath the Spring's new sky, 'mid the Spring's new blossoms straying;
 Light laughs laughed they, and sweet words they were saying,
 In a whitethorn wood, in the Maytime!

Sir Launcelot and the Queen from the Maying strayed apart;
 In his eyes was dark Love's passion; in her breast was dark Love's smart.
 Sir Launcelot and the Queen they were claspèd heart to heart
 In a whitethorn wood, in the Maytime!

O! Love's pain wakes with the wakening of the Spring!
 And it crowns a lass a queen, though she ne'er be wife of king.
 Best stay at home and spin; for O! Love's a perilous thing
 In a whitethorn wood, in the Maytime!

EVELYN GREENLEAF SUTHERLAND.



DISCOURAGING

WIFE—You will never be a society man, my dear. You are too heavy.
 HUSBAND—But I thought I was sufficiently nonsensical and unintel-
 ligent at the reception to-day.

WIFE—Ye-es, but you were so self-conscious about it.



THE EFFECT OF BEAUTY

HER hand is, oh, so passing fair,
 So small, so shapely and so white,
 So like a perfect lily rare,
 I am intoxicated quite;
 Nor deem it strange her glove should share
 My blissful state; it, too, is tight.

NIXON WATERMAN.

IN THE WORLD OF ENGLISH FICTION

By Nina R. Allen

WHAT a queer world it is,—the world of the English story-book! If we could climb up some sort of literary bean-stalk into this region we should doubtless find it, in many respects, as different from our workaday world as that strange land which burst upon the view of the redoubtable Jack when he had solved the mystery of the thick stems and interlacing branches stretching skyward from his mother's little garden.

We could not go far, I think, before we should happen upon the gray old mansion among the trees where the most important family of the story-book people lives. How many times, in books, have we seen its mullioned windows, its heavy stacks of chimneys, its ivy-covered gables and turrets! The picturesque lodge at the entrance, the long avenue lined with ancient elms, the rooks cawing overhead, the park, with its giant oaks and beeches; the shrubberies, where the nightingale sings; the broad stone terraces, and the lawn with the medlar tree—we have known them in many a book; even the stable clock has a familiar look. Hard by is the old English garden, where the peaches are ripening on the sunny south wall and the peacocks plume themselves on the mossy sun-dial. Here is the rose-tree walk where, in their season, the roses run riot in a flame of mingled white and pink and crimson; and here, sweet-smelling kitchen herbs struggle for supremacy with lupine and gilly-flower and London-pride, or pour forth their delicate scents just beyond the clipped yew-tree hedge, which shuts out the kitchen garden and the currant trees. Here, too, the

brown bees hum among the Canterbury bells, and the lavender bush lifts its spikes of fragrant mauve blossoms, while hollyhocks gleam pink and white and yellow in stately rows amid tall white lilies and sweet-william and quaint monk's-hood.

When we enter the gray old mansion we find that its architecture is somewhat peculiar. For one thing, you cannot go far within it before you will come upon a green baize door. Then, too, there are the curtained recesses—apparently of a special design—where one always hears conversation not intended for his ear. In the workaday world this listening would be uncharitably called eaves-dropping. But no one thinks anything of it here. No; poor little Phyllis is obliged to listen, at least until she has heard enough to rob her of her woman's peace. She is not to blame—the recess is built in that way. Even if she tries to leave—and she sometimes makes a feeble attempt to do so—something roots her to the spot.

The conservatory is another queer place. It is generally infested by the young man who suddenly walks in when one is about to make a proposal of marriage. It is true that he sometimes walks into other rooms, and occasionally he is already on the spot, admiring his hostess's collection of rare ferns and exotics (in the dark), and he suddenly appears, after tipping over a vase or muttering an exclamation. But usually it happens that young Knollys has asked his fair young partner to sit out the next dance in the dim, cool conservatory, and although she knows that she must

not listen to the penniless young sub-altern, if he speaks, she weakly consents, because he looks so sad, poor fellow! Young Knollys has been watching for this opportunity for a good many chapters, but he has never been able to get a word with the fair young English girl alone, because she is so jealously guarded by that old dragon, stout, red-faced Lady Charteris. For once they have eluded her vigilance. Now his whole manner changes, his face works, he seems about to say something, he has even begun with "My dar—" when the other young man—who, of course, also loves the fair English girl—suddenly walks in. Something ought to be done to rid the place of this fellow, for somehow young Knollys is easily discouraged, and does not soon get started again. He goes to Scotland for the shooting, or his regiment is ordered to India, but he doesn't declare himself, and the fair young English girl sadly droops and pines nearly all the rest of the way through the book.

The morning-room is a peculiar feature of the rambling old house. When the time comes for bringing home the bride, all that the stalwart young Englishman does, or seemingly needs to do, in order to beautify the home of his fathers for the coming of the young wife, is to get new chintz covers for the morning-room. Strange to say, the whole house is then in readiness for its fair young mistress, and when she sees those beautiful new chintz chair-covers she looks no further; she is delighted with her new home. All that she then needs to make her felicity perfect is to have the keys handed over to her by the dowager.

It is perhaps unnecessary to say that antimacassars are still in fashion here, and that no shabby old drawing-room is complete without them.

Of all the people who live in the old red brick house, or the gray old mansion—as the case may be—perhaps no one leads quite so hard and dreary a life as the governess. She is despised by the servants, ignored or

snubbed by the ladies of the family, abused by the children. She slaves from morning till night. When she has nothing else to do she is straining her short-sighted eyes over exercises in the cold, dingy schoolroom. She rarely has anything to wear but a shabby brown frock. Even if her old uncle dies and leaves his poor sister's only child a small legacy, the best she can hope for is a decent gown of black stuff and a cottage straw with a white ribbon upon it. (Bonnets and shawls are still fashionable here.)

I am satisfied that the governess does not have enough to eat. No wonder that she is such a poor little washed-out creature! She cuts enormous piles of bread-and-butter and pours out quantities of a sloppy beverage for the children's schoolroom tea, but no one hears of her having a share, not even when the children have been good and, as a great treat, are allowed a meat tea.

If you are the governess here, old, and ugly to boot, there is no hope for you; you will have to go on cutting bread-and-butter, like Werther's *Charlotte*. If you are young and pretty, you may turn out to be somebody else, or you may discover your long-lost grandfather, or the young squire, who has come down to the Hall for the shooting, may notice you and say to himself:

"Egad, that's a deucedly pretty girl! It's a beastly shame that she should be tormented by those brats of my sister's!" And he may marry you, after quarreling with all of his relations.

What a contrast to the life of the dingy, spectacled governess is that of cook! Now, cook is a person of consequence in the gray old mansion. The old master respects her because that woman knows how to make sauces, by Jove! while the children have a genuine affection for one who has undoubtedly access to the jam-pots. She always has plenty to eat, has cook. The servants' table at the Hall is loaded with good things, of which cook has her full share. And if she is feeling a bit low in her mind, cook does

not hesitate to brew for herself some comforting beverage. Besides, I suspect that she avails herself of sundry appetizing tid-bits between meals when something has happened to give her such a turn that you could knock her down with a feather; she then fortifies herself with some of the fruit tart or a bit of the cold roast fowl or the remains of the grouse pie, to say nothing of surreptitious draughts from a black bottle, which she conceals under her apron when necessary.

To be sure, cook's complexion may be somewhat highly colored; there is little doubt that she wears her skirts a trifle short, and sometimes stands with arms akimbo, while I feel quite sure that her waist-measure is at least thirty-six inches. But what of that? No one dares insinuate that cook is fat, or even stout. No; she is spoken of as having a comfortable figure. Even the smart housemaid—the one, I mean, who always has a fresh ribbon in her cap, just as the London slavey is never without a smut on her nose—even the smart housemaid ventures to give but little rein to her natural flippancy in cook's presence. When, amid the warmth, the good cheer and chatter of the servants' hall, cook begins to express her opinion of the match which young master is about to make, or to discuss the state of the family finances, just notice how quickly the smart housemaid stops giggling and flirting with the bashful footman, and how respectfully the servants all listen to cook!

In short, cook suffers from only one drawback in an existence otherwise enviable: her choice in matrimony appears to be limited to the gray-haired butler. Personally, I should be pleased if, for the sake of variety, cook might occasionally, at least, have the chance to accept the haberdasher or the green-grocer. However, she might do much worse than be married to the gray-haired butler. At any rate, he is respectable. How much more pitiable would be the case of cook if, like that poor sweet young thing, Lady Doris, she were forced

by a worldly minded mother into marriage with that old-young man, Sir Charles Cavendish, or rich old Lord St. Leger, who lisps, and paints, and is suspected of wearing stays!

Sometimes cook and the gray-haired butler manage to save a tidy sum between them, and then they leave the old Hall, and take over a house from somebody and let lodgings, or more often they set up a little shop. And what a pleasant place is cook's little shop, with the draper's wife or the chemist's lady coming in for a comfortable gossip over the counter, and going away with whity-brown paper parcels! How cozy, too, is cook's stuffy little back parlor, with its green-curtained door opening into the shop, and the black kettle hissing on the hob, and its smell of hot buttered cakes and other good things! However, cook and the gray-haired butler are not long contented here. The butler feels that the family cannot get on without him; the plate and the cellar are on his mind; and as for cook, she is worried for fear that a hole will be burned through the best damask tablecloth by the feckless young laundry-maid. So they go back to the old Hall, and cook once more has the run of the pantries. On the whole, I think I would rather be cook than almost anyone else here.

The English doctor is another person who does not find life difficult in the story-book world. Apparently, he needs to learn only one thing before buying a practice, and that is how to prescribe a composing-draught. No matter what your ailment, whether it be hysterics or typhoid fever or a great sorrow, the medical man will leave you a composing-draught, and the next morning you have almost recovered, although you are still looking a little pale.

The English detective, also, is not overworked in this queer world. He exists, as I have just intimated, but his services are not actually needed. When one wishes to obtain a clue to any mystery, all that he has to do is to examine somebody's blotting-book. The stately housekeeper—she who is

always in black silk, and who drops a respectful curtsey so often—the stately housekeeper will tell you that a deal may be found out from a blotting-book. She herself has never thought that the young mistress was any better than she should be, though the master (poor, unsuspecting gentleman!) dotes on her, and is as blind as blind. So the housekeeper eagerly scans her ladyship's blotting-book (she owes this to the honor of the family she has served forty year and more); she even holds it up to the looking-glass. And who can doubt that the lady's guilt is now made as plain as the nose on your face?

The hero of the English story-book is a poor creature. Sometimes he is a foolish and garrulous old woman, sometimes a crabbed spinster, but most often he is a sulky brute who will balk unless he has the most careful management. Even the lady-novelist—for it is she who manages things here—even the lady-novelist realizes that she cannot do much for him. But her heroine needs an establishment; she has already gone off considerably in her looks, and so the lady-novelist patches the hero up a little here and tinkers him a little there, and over all puts on a coat of whitewash, which she fondly hopes is thick enough to last until he is married. Then she makes someone speak of him as a fine figure of a man. But, after he is safely married, she washes her hands of him with almost indecent haste, for she knows that she can no longer keep up appearances. And who can blame her? Does anyone believe that he said all of those nice things to the heroine? No; those are what he ought to have said; they are what the lady-novelist would have said had she been in his place. The lady-novelist doesn't believe that he said them, and, moreover, she knows that we do not believe it, either. We even have our doubts about the magnificent half-hoop of diamonds which she says he gave to the heroine.

Once in a while a decent sort of chap is allowed to engage himself to

the heroine, but he is not permitted to marry her. He is called away on urgent business; he is entrusted with an errand of such delicacy that no one else can do it, or his old uncle, who brought him up, dies, and he is obliged to follow the poor old man to the churchyard as chief mourner. Then the lady-novelist gets up an awful shipwreck, or such a railway collision as has not been known for years, and whoever else escapes, *he* doesn't. All of the heroine's friends and relations then tell her that poor Reggie was a good fellow, but that he wasn't the husband for her. What she needs is a strong man—a man to whom she can look up; somebody (they mean) who will swear like a trooper when the coffee is cold, who will talk to her as if she were a fool, and order her about as he would a servant, and roar "Peace, woman!" if she ventures to open her mouth. "Masterful" is what the lady-novelist calls him, and the heroine needs a husband who is a masterful kind of man.

Sometimes, after a few years of happy married life, the sulky br—, I mean the masterful man, dies; he meets with an accident in the hunting-field, or his favorite mare, Black Bess, is obliging enough to throw him and break his neck when he is riding home from the county town some moonlight night, although she has never been known to do such a thing before. But no one professes to be sorry except the widow. She puts on a widow's cap and raises a morsel of lace and cambric to her eyes, and tells everybody how hard it is for a poor, weak woman to be deprived of her protector. Nobody, however, is deceived for a moment. Everybody knows that now she will refurnish the house or go to the Riviera for the Winter, and enjoy herself rarely, while her male relatives openly say that she will have a mint of money, and now she can marry that cousin she used to be fond of—lucky beggar!

The heroine who knows something which she won't tell, abounds in the world of the English story-book. She is found in some other places, also,

but she is indigenous here. She knows something which is eating like a canker into her young life—it is more than likely that it is something which she has heard in one of those curtained recesses—and, ultimately, it involves the fate of her whole family. Henceforth her silence must be as that of the grave. There are great dark circles under her eyes; anyone can see what she suffers—and no wonder, when she can't talk! Her mother, with tears in her eyes, begs her to tell what terrible mystery is robbing that young cheek of its bloom and streaking those bright tresses with silver. But she speaks not. Her father fails visibly as he sees the cruel change in his favorite daughter, his bonny Kate. Still she preserves that strange, that unnatural silence. Her brother takes to gambling; her elder sister goes into a decline. She can only look on in dull misery. No one can persuade the suffering young creature to ease her heart of its burden. From this it may be seen that in this topsy-turvy world the nature of the difficulty is directly opposite to that commonly observed in the workaday world. No one can induce her to talk here, while there—

The common people are not numerous in the world of the English story-book. They exist principally because they are needed to inhabit the little village near the gray old mansion, which bears the name of the family in the great house. The children of the place are useful to pull their forelocks to the gentlefolks as they pass, while the older people are in demand to furnish district-visiting to the ladies of the gentry, who need some outlet for their energies besides tea-drinking. And what a pleasant institution is district-visiting! How enjoyable to be old blind Sally or Dame Martin or Mrs. Stubbs, the charwoman, and to have the rector's lady or the squire's young daughter walk into your cottage and investigate the cupboards, and talk like a tract, and find fault because the baby's face is dirty!

Tea-drinking is a most important

institution in the world of the English story-book. It has been known to bring a dilatory lover to time when everything else had failed. The heroine, in a smart braided frock of French gray, is pouring out tea in the drawing-room, when Sir Noel, with the other men, in hunting pink and splashed with mud, enters and begs for a cup of tea. Need I say that his fate is sealed when he sees her mite of a hand (her gloves are number sevens) flashing among the teacups? It then occurs to him that she is a good sort and will suit him down to the ground, or he suddenly discovers that she is a fine woman, and wonders how she would look at the head of his table.

Reading about the incessant drinking of tea and the eating of thin bread-and-butter will create an appetite second only to that produced by a perusal of the cook-book. What, for instance, will make one hungrier, and is at the same time more provoking, than to read in a woman's novel of the women doing with tea and thin bread-and-butter, or having an early tea-supper, because, forsooth, the men are to dine out that evening? They can just as well have what they want to eat (in a novel) as not. What is to prevent them from having fried sole or broiled salmon, with tartar sauce, or lobster cutlets, or roast pheasant, or a joint of mutton, or, at least, a savory omelet? It is nothing out of the novelist's pocket. A man wouldn't be so economical, especially on paper. He would give us something more substantial than tea and thin bread-and-butter, — a venison pasty or a grilled bone, for instance.

Yes, the story-book world is a queer world, but, withal, a pleasant one—a world of love and youth and Springtime.

“The lilacs and laburnums were in bloom.” Easy to believe, with such a beginning, that love is eternal, and that the church door always opens into Paradise, and that everything must come out right in the end.

It is a beautiful world, too, where Springtime is almost perpetual; a

world odorous with the breath of sulphur-tinted primroses peeping forth from hedgerow and coppice; a world of hedges white with May, of purple moors, and hillsides yellow with the golden blossoms of the gorse; a world sweet with the voice of the rising lark and of the cuckoo calling all day long from the blossoming orchards of early Spring, and of the nightingale breaking its heart in the coverts.

But it is a queer world, because, until we near the end of the book, everything goes wrong. The machinery runs only with continual jars and hitches, and one breakdown is no sooner repaired than another much

worse occurs. All of a sudden, apparently for no better reason than that there are only a few pages of the book left to read, the heroine begins to talk; the members of her family who have not died begin to pass the crisis safely; her brother begins to reform; the family fortunes begin to mend; everybody in the book, old or young, rich or poor, bachelor, spinster or widow, is married off; the heroine's absent lover comes home an earl, although three lives stood between him and the title when he went away; and so the heroine herself goes happily to church, and is at last settled in life.

A queer world. But who would have it different?



FANCIES IN MAYTIME

WERE I a blue forget-me-not,
Bright as Dorinda's eyes,
And might it be my favored lot
To take her by surprise,
I'd but repeat
My name so sweet,
And hearken her replies.

Were I a fresh and fragrant rose,
Pure as Dorinda's cheek,
Close to her heart in fond repose
My refuge I would seek;
There would I rest,
So glad, so blest,
I should not care to speak.

E. S. F.



FAIR WARNING

THE HUSBAND—My dear, I hear that Mr. Highflyer is flirting with you.
THE WIFE—Well, what of it?

THE HUSBAND—Oh, nothing. Only, when he gets tired of it, don't come to me and expect to be sympathized with.

THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS

By Elizabeth Harman

“O H, yes,” said the salesgirl in the florist’s shop, in answer to my question, as she twisted purple tinfoil around the stems of my violets, “we find out a good deal about our customers. That gentleman over there, for instance, with the crêpe band on his sleeve—he’s been coming here for a long time. We know all about him.”

I followed the direction of her eyes, and saw a tall, good-looking, blondish man, extremely well dressed, and having the air of wealth and breeding. Though his hair was neither long nor curly, there was a gentle melancholy about his large eyes that made him look as if he might be a poet, and his serious manner, as he selected some delicately tinted purple orchids, and carefully tried different shades of ribbon with them, showed that he valued rightly the power of little things.

“And what about him?” I asked, sniffing about among the roses and carnations on the counter.

“Well,” said the girl, “I began to notice him about two years ago. At first he used to come about once a week and order flowers, and, of course, after a while we noticed that they were always sent to the same address—‘Miss Alice Lemar.’ He gradually began coming oftener and oftener, until we knew that he was good for an order every day. One afternoon he came in with a girl—one of those laughy, bright, motiony girls that I would love, too, if I were a man—and she had on the loveliest clothes you ever saw; and when he said, ‘Now, Miss Alice, we must get you

the very prettiest flowers they have,’ we girls looked at each other with that look which takes the place of a wink when winking is out of the question, and which meant, in that case, ‘Here she is at last,’ or, ‘Now we know what she looks like.’ She was so nice and talky, and not a bit stuck up. Before she left she had said something natural and human to every one of us—not patronizingly, you know; oh! you know how—just as if it never could occur to her that we weren’t people to be talked to brightly and nicely. After that the flowers she got were every one picked specimens of perfection, and when one day an order came for a big bouquet of white rosebuds and white violets and a spray of orange blossoms, to be tied with white ribbon and sent to Miss Alice Lemar, you may be sure that we all had a hand in preparing it. Really, it was the handsomest bouquet that ever went out from this shop, and it went with the honest good wishes of every one of us.

“After they were married, he didn’t drop off in his attentions the way lots of men do; he kept on giving her just as many flowers, if not more, only now they were addressed to ‘Mrs. Harold Harrison.’ That kept up for about a year, when one day he came in, looking anxious but happy, and ordered a great bunch of full-blown American Beauties to be sent to his wife—I was waiting on him, and I had the address written before he spoke it—and then he selected some of those tiny little cluster rosebuds, pink ones, and said, looking a little sheepish, ‘Please send those to Master Harold Harrison, Junior,

same address.' I didn't show by the wink of an eyelash that I had 'caught on,' but I tucked a big pansy in the box with her roses, just to let her know we were thinking of her.

"Two days afterward there came an order from him, by telephone, for dozens and dozens of white roses and white violets, and dozens of tiny white buds. We knew what had happened without reading the deaths in the papers. Maude—she is the girl over there with the droopy blonde hair and the big brown eyes—she sits up half the night reading novels—just sat down on the floor behind the counter and cried, and even I, who pose as strong-minded, couldn't help feeling

that fate had made a mistake in taking that bright, pretty girl and her little baby away from a world where they had everything the human heart could wish for. That was a year and a half ago."

She sighed, and gazed retrospectively at the opposite wall.

"Oh, how sad, but yet how sweet!" I exclaimed. "And he still wears that band of crêpe on his sleeve for her, and he was getting those orchids, I suppose, for her grave?"

"Oh, no," said the girl, with the half-sad smile of the philosopher; "that crêpe is for his mother-in-law—his second one—and those orchids are for his wife."



IN RUBRIC

I OPED an antique missal clasped with gold,
The puckered parchment cover fretted o'er
With curious figures some skilled hand of yore
Limned thereupon,—designs minutely scrolled;
And on an oft-thumbed page did I behold
One word in rubric—**LOVE**. This, and no more,
I marked among black-letter lines a score,
So deeply did it on my heart take hold.

To one I showed it whose bright aureole
Of hair had filched the first soft lights of dawn,
And over it she brooded lingeringly;
Could she but ope the missal of my soul,
And turn each page, in rubric thereupon
That word, and that word only, would she see!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



A COME DOWN

QUERICUS—What do you think of the new woman, who wants the earth?
CYNICUS—It's been found that if she gets an offer of marriage she is satisfied with a Queen Anne cottage out in Lonelyhurst.

HABELAIS

By John Regnault Ellyson

I WAS one day telling my cousin of an adventure that happened in the forest of Fontainebleau, and I mentioned by chance the profession of my companion.

"Oh, my dear," murmured the lady, "you should have felt seriously compromised in the company of a common vagabond."

"Very true, I dare say, madam," said I, "but, in fact, I felt very much honored."

And here my adventure ended.

The friend of whom I had spoken was Habelais, the famous Parisian snake-charmer. He was no more a vagabond than my good cousin, and assuredly he was the most uncommon being conceivable. I doubt if you could have found anywhere another singular genius like Habelais. Let me say that he was no mere snake-charmer, though as such he had won his first laurels, and so he was pleased to call himself, even after he became the true prince of all jugglers.

Early in his career he mastered the secrets of legerdemain and magic. He sought out novelties; he put by the dull tricks, the worn trappings, the old methods, and grew skilled in a new order of sorceries by which the keen wits of the ingenious were confounded; he performed unheard-of marvels with incredible ease and dexterity. In time, too, he did what few idols of the people have ever done: he abandoned the stage in the midst of his triumphs, and afterward he astonished the world with only one of his mysterious entertainments—the last of his performances—his remarkable disappearance, which completely baf-

fled his comrades as well as the public and the police.

Most Parisians, knowing little about Habelais's real personality, regarded him purely in his character as a magician; they were dazzled and amused, and so were satisfied. His friends were attached to him, however, because of his fraternal and more subtle qualities and rare gifts. In the intimacy of social intercourse he appeared at his best. He was very affable and very engaging, always an excellent companion, but a fellow of whimsical humor and infinite caprice. So much imbued was he with the spirit of gaiety, and so much a lover of the art he followed, that none of us at times could claim to be exactly himself in the presence of Habelais. Indeed, he frequently played with his friends as in days gone by he had played with his favorite reptiles, indulging in all kinds of vagaries and curious manifestations—a feature that just now may as well be more fully described.

One evening, while last in Paris, I dined with Habelais at his own apartments, where I admired again the familiar surroundings—the walls covered with sea-green leather, the elegant arches, the Moresque vases in the angles, the portraits, the buffet with its crystals and the tall ebony pedestal, on which rested the clock, much like a monk's head, capped with a pigmy-figure of Harlequin sitting astride.

We dined alone, and the repast was unexcelled. Habelais ate lightly, but, as usual, he lingered over the wines. I am sure he was never in a livelier mood; his pale round face wrinkled

in smiles, and his little black eyes sparkled as he pressed the glass against his lips with sly grace, or prattled deliciously, and ever and anon he turned some piquant episode into vivid pantomime. He laughed and jested, gave me glimpses of the past, and made those naive personal confessions that so invariably beguiled his intimate friends; but he also talked of other matters, of small affairs and great crimes, of women and art, of fresh scandals and old comedies.

It was then, I think, that he spoke of Madame de Mussan, who went everywhere and enchanted everyone, and whom I had met in Florence and in Vienna. Truly he had here an unending theme, and he touched upon it with delicacy, with fervor, with characteristic charm. And while he sounded her praises like a lover, I hung upon his syllables and breathed softly, lest I might mar the pleasure I received.

But he concluded abruptly by saying:

“And now you are happy, since the divinity is among us once more!”

“How?” I questioned; “in Paris?”

“What, and the high priest has had no hint of this?”

“No jesting, my good Habelais; be serious.”

“Seriously, then. Shall we go to Madame’s shrine and offer our vows?”

“Ah, with all my heart,” said I.

“But why not first see the new play and Coquelin?”

“I had forgotten that—but, doubtless, she will be there.”

“Doubtless.”

“Then let it be as you wish,” I answered; “just as you say.”

I looked up as I spoke and noted the time by the clock on the pedestal in front of me. My host, looking around and seeing that it lacked a few minutes of eight, tapped upon the bell at his side. The valet, a nimble lad, came in and took orders as Habelais delighted in giving them—by a glance of the eye or a wave of his hand. The lad went through his services and got us ready without delay.

In leaving the rooms, if I am not deceived, we were still chatting of Madame de Mussan and Coquelin and the new play.

On the street I felt at first confused by the glare and the noise. It was Carnival season, and the people quaintly attired and in masks were numerous and frolicsome. Before we had gone far on our way I thought I recognized two wags, who called us by name and rallied us, and I questioned my companion, but he put his finger on his lips and took my arm at the same time, and we walked on in silence.

The night was fine, perhaps, if anything, somewhat too cool, but I enjoyed the freshness of the air as much as the animation and brisk gambols of the revelers. These pleasantries were diverting, undoubtedly. When I glanced again at the countenance of my friend, I observed that his brow had contracted, his round chin had grown pointed and his eyes had prodigiously enlarged. It was nothing but one of his little illusions, however, and I saw at once, of course, that my whimsical friend was seeking to amuse himself at my expense; so, determined to turn the game in my own favor, I quietly affected to be in nowise surprised. Habelais drew his hand across his features, which soon lost their unnatural outlines.

We passed into the Rue de St. Honoré and under the arcade of the Théâtre Français. Certainly this was my impression, and yet, after we entered, the interior, I perceived, could scarcely be that of the famous playhouse; it resembled in the main the auditorium of the Opéra, though it seemed even more brilliant and more spacious. Every recess was filled; I do not remember to have seen people in equal numbers, a gathering more attractive, such abundance of color, so many rare costumes or so much beauty. The whole of the vast space hummed with human voices; the fragrance of a garden pervaded the warm air, that quivered with a thousand lights.

Nor was it long before the orchestra

sounded and the curtain rose. The opening pageant excited applause—a magnificent scene laid in Damascus or in Bagdad, I believe, but in this I may be wrong. I am uncertain, for the fact is, at the moment I had eyes only for a single object. In one of the loges on the left of the stage I fancied I discovered the charming features of Madame de Mussan, and I sought to obtain Habelais's assurance.

"I beg you, Habelais," said I, leaning aside; but immediately the hot blood flushed up in my face and I said no more.

While sitting with his lids drooped modestly, mute and grave, Habelais had actually removed his small, black, bead-like eyes from under his brow, and now he was wiping them with the end of his silk handkerchief and setting them in place, as one wipes a pair of glasses and adjusts them on the nose. It was all done very adroitly, but how indiscreet it was, and how indecorous!

Habelais saw that I was extremely vexed, and, putting on a conciliatory air, he made amends by offering his bonbonnière. It was so droll—as if he could soothe me quickly, like a child, with a bit of sugar-paste! I smiled in spite of myself, and accepted the little box, which, flaming like a jewel in my hand, slipped from me by chance and, rolling beneath my feet, burst into pieces with a strange sound. And in that instant everything changed, just as the scenes shift in a grotesque dream.

"Habelais, what has happened?" I demanded.

"Ah," said he, "it may be we have fallen somewhere."

Indeed, I confess I had conceived the very same notion. We were quite alone and encompassed about by the rugged masonry of high stone walls, in which I could see no means of exit—no doors, no windows. The sand under foot appeared moist, and I thought I heard water dripping from the crevices of the rock.

"How like the pit of an old fountain!" said I.

"Or a monk's cell," suggested Habelais.

"What, a monk's cell without an opening?"

He pointed above us, and I saw the dark sky and the stars.

By the brightening twilight of the stars I observed an antique kneeling-stool, on which lay a large volume of manuscript on vellum bound in oaken boards. I bent over the book and read its astonishing title: "The Life and Miracles of St. Habelais, of Tours."

"And who—who was he?" I asked.

"The first of my forefathers," said Habelais, "the most devout of us all—he whose blood the good Abbess of Mussan preserved and thus gave rise to our brood—a brood of sorcerers—"

"Then by your sorcery, I pray," said I, "let us get out of this hallowed place."

"Say rather let us enter!" Habelais replied.

I shivered and looked about me. It was night, but the night was as brilliant as noonday. We were standing before the Church of St. Roch, and many were gathering here from every direction, yet without noise and without confusion; persons of name and figure in the world, judges and poets, connoisseurs, artists and princes, women of great beauty and children no less comely and noble, and all these, the young and the old, wore the most serious air. I wondered at the illumination of the night, at the character of the people and the melancholy in which everyone appeared wrapped; the occasion, I thought, must be one of unusual solemnity.

"Habelais," said I, "is all the world grown grave?"

"And you, my friend?" said he, and then he whispered a mocking word in my ear and mingled with the crowd.

I glanced down at once and I saw that I had on the gay colors of Harlequin. Those who were near by heard my exclamation of surprise and looked at me and touched their neighbors; the impulse passed from group to

group, from man to man, and some turned upon me with angry gestures and some with menaces. My fears were aroused, and I took flight, pursued by the maledictions of the throng and borne on speedily by the desire of getting beyond the reach of peril.

I do not know how far I had gone when suddenly I ran against a gentleman with considerable violence. I did not jostle him off his feet, however, nor did I even ruffle his serenity; he disengaged himself and bowed. In my turn, I made my bow, asked pardon and stole a glance at the stranger as I lifted my head. The features, the smile, the impish eyes!—indeed, how could he have been other than Habelais?

I fell into his arms and sighed profoundly.

“How luckily met!” said Habelais. “Do you know, I have seen Madame de Mussan, and I have spoken of you. ‘Madame,’ said I, ‘you have driven my poor friend into a monastery.’ ‘What?’ said she, ‘how say you?’ ‘This is truth, madame,’ I answered. ‘Ah, then he shall forswear his vows!’ she added, warmly; ‘I tell you, he shall forswear his vows, and I shall wear him in my heart forever—’”

“By all means, my dear Habelais,” said I, “let us go there at once!”

“In this garb of Harlequin?—oh, no!” said Habelais, laughing, and taking up the monk’s habit that hung folded on his arm, he muffled me in it swiftly, drawing the cord about my waist and the cowl over my head.

“It becomes you wonderfully!” cried he.

“Yes, yes,” said I, “but come, let us go now, by all means!”

“We are here!” said Habelais.

And so we were. We ascended the steps of the mansion. We were soon led into the *salon*, where we found Madame de Mussan among her distinguished friends. Habelais was well received, but in the manner of my reception nothing was left for vanity to desire. No hero could have been welcomed more cordially; no lover could have been more flattered or more honored. While I paid my

mute homage, I listened to Madame’s charming voice. She made me known among her guests; she extolled my merits; she spoke of my poems, and then I blushed and trembled.

“Ah, madame, forgive me, but my poems are yet in my heart.”

“And your heart, monsieur?”

“It is yours, madame,” said I, gallantly; “play upon it, therefore, as you please!”

And as my lips caressed her fingers, I felt within me the vibration of a spring, my garments loosened, and in the same instant my heart leaped out of my bosom and rolled toward the feet of Madame de Mussan.

I acknowledge frankly that I was less amazed at the curious incident than at the interest immediately inspired and the enthusiasm awakened on all sides. There was but one note of discord—the voice of Habelais.

“My friend,” said he, “are you bewitched? I protest, your realism knows no bounds. You have blown up the Opéra, broken into the cell of a saint, undertaken to serve at mass in the colors of Harlequin, and now—now, at least, let me beg of you to be seated while the *savans* analyze this very singular gift—the heart of a poet.”

I made no reply, for in a situation of the kind there is so little to be said. My embarrassment would have been extreme if attention had not been happily centred on the article, which someone had already set in a salver on the gilded tripod near Madame’s chair.

I sank upon an ottoman, leaned forward, dallied with my girdle and gave ear to the wisdom of the wise. All those who were there had bold ideas which they advanced, or experiences of which they hinted, speculations on which they harped or perplexities over which they lingered, conjectures which they propounded or enigmas which they solved. They reasoned freely and well; they argued long and eloquently.

None of them, however, proved so irresistible as Madame de Mussan, but what more natural in the breathing

spirit, in the oracle of a brilliant, modern circle? She easily eclipsed the young seers, the learned doctors, the gray cynics. Now she frowned in mimic wrath and now she smiled; she used her fan unceasingly; she swayed with animation; she colored deeply; she chatted racily and made mirth for the little world on which she glowed. She laid bare many errors of the *savans*, shattered some of their ideals, and one by one she established the verities of her own system; but, in setting forth her theories of philosophy and art and love, she discoursed after so witty a fashion, yet with so much emotion and so much grace, in a style so clear and in tones so musical, that I could truly feel the beating of my heart in the salver on the gilded tripod at the feet of the beautiful Parisienne.

It was delightful; I was sure I had never passed an hour in a more agreeable manner. Then, after a time, there came a change, though only in detail, and yet none the less remarkable. The utterances of the fair lady, in fact, assumed the most novel character; the language in which she clothed her thoughts was always felicitous and graphic, but now the expressions, the mere words in themselves, as if in consequence of emotional force and abounding vivacity, got to be imbued with subtle and rare colors. The lady's figure still swayed to and fro, the face flushed like a rose and the lips moved daintily; but the voice grew faint and yet fainter, its murmur at last ceased altogether, and one after another the words, losing themselves before they reached the ear, became curiously visible to the eye. I could not conceive by what means the effect was wrought, but certainly these syllables and phrases, for which we listened in vain, were exhaled rather than uttered, and, shedding perfume among us, took forms strangely resembling smoke-rings and whiffs of tinted dust and jeweled thistledown—glimmering moths and fire-flies that softly floated through the air and arose and clung about the mirror-

frames and the burnished candelabra, about the carved doorways and the silken draperies, and about the outlines of the guests, until every object quivered iridescently and seemed fantastically beset with trailed webs of cloud and cloven flame.

In the meanwhile, all the guests were lulled and singularly charmed—all save myself. I was under the spell, I own, but the influence that quieted my comrades irritated me. I soon grew somewhat alarmed, besides, and palpitated like one struggling in his sleep. I breathed with difficulty in the atmosphere heavy with odor and made luminous and dense by the lights and the mystical vapor, and I was seriously perplexed, too, because I could scarcely here distinguish one from another among the company. I passed my handkerchief across my moist brow and looked around me eagerly, and my gaze at last rested for a moment upon the features of Habelais.

At the same time there came a sound like that of some great bell, far-off, but clear and resonant; a deep, tremulous, sweet peal, and then a pause, and again the chimed echo. There was something natural in the sound and something of magic; the air freshened by degrees; the mist and the nebulous atoms shifted as leaves in the wind; the flames of the candelabra dwindled; the carvings of the door-frames curled up like scrolls; the draperies fluttered and crumbled and the guests faded away from view like so many phantoms, and once again I beheld about me the familiar objects of Habelais's apartments. I could now see very distinctly the sea-green leather with which the walls were hung, the elegant arches, the vases in the angles, the portraits, the buffet with its quaint crystals. Here under my fingers lay the white napery of the table—here at hand were the wine-glasses, still half-filled, and there beyond stood the tall ebony shaft surmounted by the clock, which was striking the hour, giving pause between each of the eight prolonged and sonorous strokes.

Nor had we moved. Habelais sat before me, laughing at the expression my countenance portrayed, and issuing orders to the servant in the mode that so pleased him—by the glance of the eye or the wave of his hand, either of which

was more significant than a king's. "Come, my friend," said he, rising then; "come, it's growing late. For the present you have seen enough of the divine de Mussan; let us now go and see the new play and the incomparable Coquelin."



FREEDOM

MY home is where the wandering foot
 At evenfall may chance to wend,
 And where mine host may spread the board
 And grace himself the table's end,
 And tell old tales beside the hearth,
 And toast me guest and friend.

And on the morrow wish me speed
 And bid me forth—me, masterless;
 There be no clinging hands to hold
 Mine own with strength of tenderness,
 No face that pleads a backward glance,
 No voice to ban or bless.

Yet sometimes comes a strange, swift wish
 To feel a hand close in my own,
 And sometimes comes a thought how cold
 The blaze upon my host's hearthstone;
 Sometimes—nay, fool, he travels free
 Only who travels lone.

McCREA PICKERING.



THE INEVITABLE INFERENCE

MRS. BROWNE-STONE—My present husband reminds me so much of my first one.

MRS. JOKE-SMITH—What's the matter with him?



THE WAY OPEN

FUNNYCUSS—Why do you laugh so much? I'm not tickling you.

MISS BLOOMLEIGH—No; but you might as well be.

WILD ANIMALS I HAVE KNOWN

By Carolyn Wells

The Lion

I 'VE met this beast in drawing-rooms,
'Mong ladies gay with silks and plumes.
He looks quite bored, and silly, too,
When he's held up to social view.
I think I like him better when,
Alone, I brave him in his den.

The Bear

I never seek the surly Bear,
But if I meet him in his lair
I say: "Good day, sir; sir, good day,"
And then make haste to get away.
It is no pleasure, I declare,
To meet the cross, ill-natured Bear.

The Pig

This animal I've seen on view
In dining-rooms and street cars, too;
He wants the most, he wants the best,
He makes himself a perfect pest.
And (though I think it to their shame)
Many give him a grosser name.

The Goose

I know it would be of no use
To say I'd never met a Goose.
There are so many all around,
With idle look and clacking sound;
And sometimes it has come to pass
I've seen one in my looking-glass.

The Duck

This merry one, with laughing eyes,
Not too sedate nor overwise,
Is best of comrades, frank and free,
A clever hand at making tea;
A fearless nature, full of pluck,
I like her well—she *is* a Duck.

The Cat

The Cat's a nasty little beast;
 She's seen at many a fête and feast.
 She's spiteful, sly and double-faced,
 Exceeding prim, exceeding chaste.
 And while a soft, sleek smile she wears,
 Her neighbor's reputation tears.

The Puppy

Of all the animals I've met
 The Puppy is the worst as yet.
 Clumsy and crude, he hasn't brains
 Enough to come in when it rains.
 But with insufferable conceit
 He thinks that he is just too sweet!

The Kid

Kids are the funniest things I know;
 Nothing they do but eat and grow.
 They're frolicsome, and it is said
 They eat tin cans and are not dead.
 I'm not astonished at that feat,
 For all things else I've seen them eat.



A SERIOUS OBJECTION

LADY CUSTOMER—Haven't you a parrot that won't swear?

BIRD DEALER—Yes, but it wouldn't suit you. It will have the last word.



THE FENCER

“HOW shall I fight my bout with Life?” cried Youth.
 “I, who know nothing of the feint and thrust,
 Fleuret and *trois-quarts*, and yet fight I must
 With the Great Fencer, for he knows no ruth.”

Then spoke the Sage in words of wise import:
 “Place but the pad of Humor on thy breast,
 And Humor, though Life's blows be well addressed,
 Shall turn the fiercest battle into sport.”

ELISABETH FINLEY.

THE SILKEN CORD

By Carlton Dawe

EVER since the episode of the "Stolen Emperor," when I rendered his Imperial Majesty, the Son of Heaven, a personal service, I have been a sort of privileged individual in Peking and within the sacred precincts of the Forbidden City. It was here I often came in contact with Loh-wi-Kung, one of the numerous officials of the celestial court. He was a fine-looking man, some thirty or thirty-five years of age, handsome as his race allows, well-knit and splendidly proportioned. A general favorite at court, or, at least, as general a favorite as one could be among that envious crowd, he had been but lately promoted to the position of a grand secretary to the Emperor, and all people predicted that a Viceroyalty would naturally follow.

As for Loh himself, he appeared to entertain no foolish dreams of any such exalted post; and when I jokingly questioned him as to the probability of such a high mark of imperial favor, he shook his head. There was a great difference between writing a royal letter and governing a royal province.

The fact is, Loh had not carved a Viceroyalty out of his reputation. It was not one out of which a Viceroyalty could be carved. True, he was a favorite of the Emperor, he was also a scholar of some pretensions; but he was a man of a somewhat profligate character. When the Emperor forgot his dignity he herded with fellows like Loh; when an event of moment loomed upon the horizon, he called to his council a totally different class of man.

All the same, Loh and the gentlemen of his kidney came in for most of

the good things of this life, and but for his presumption he might still be basking in the royal smiles of his imperial master. It is natural that contact with royalty must rob it of some of its terrors; it is even possible, in some instances, that royalty may marvel at its own glory; but even when most dissolute, it has a sort of drunken dignity that is apt to prove dangerous. Loh, wise in general knowledge, overlooked one essential. He forgot that the pallid youth who occasionally condescended to hang upon his arm was the absolute lord and master of some four hundred millions of human beings.

That Loh was an accomplished gentleman was indisputable; that he was extremely handsome no impartial observer could deny. I also thought that he was something more than a gallant and debauchee. I believed that he had it in him to rise to distinction if he would only go to work in a proper manner; but he was cynical to a degree, and always made fun of my serious proposals. With clear eyes he had chosen the muddy path—his shoes were thick with mud. He had gained the Emperor's friendship, but at the loss of his own self-respect. I am of opinion that he did not think the gain of the one outweighed the loss of the other.

There was a tone of desperate pessimism about the man which attracted me in spite of myself. Shame bred it, and pride brought the bitter words to the tongue. The Grand Secretary Loh, the confidant of the Fount of All Wisdom, was a miserable man.

One day he came to me in my office, stealthily closed the door and locked

it after him, and then stood staring at me with quick, inquisitive eyes. Every action, even the way he breathed, showed me that the man labored under great excitement. His face was more pallid than usual; his long fingers beat inconsequent tattoos upon the breast of his coat. It was perfectly obvious that something serious had happened.

Suddenly he shot out his open hand, saying, "You are my friend?"

"I hope so."

"I think I understand you, Clandon. You have the cold blood of the Englishman, the thoughtful brain."

"My dear Loh, you flatter me."

"I do not mean to flatter, Clandon; no Chinese compliments, as you call them. I only think you are not so great a fool as I."

"But I insist, my dear Loh; you are very kind."

He waved his hand deprecatingly.

"I insist that you are not so great a fool. If you were, should I come to you?"

"But I protest."

"Listen. How many times have you said, 'Loh, you are a yellow turnip; you fail utterly to do yourself justice?' Tell me, how many times?"

"I hope I was never so rude."

"I threw away the husk, but preserved the kernel. The rudeness was forgiven for the wisdom within it. Is a man a swine that he should lead the swine's life of horrid indolence? Was imagination given him to glaze his imperfections? You are a wise man, Clandon; tell me."

"It was scarcely necessary that you should come to me for such an obvious reply. What has happened?"

He looked at the door; then he turned once more and faced me.

"Clandon, you are my friend?"

"Remember," said I, "that it is you who have come to me. I have not sought your confidence."

"Pardon me." Again he looked round. Then he uttered oracularly the Chinese proverb: "When you converse in the road, remember there are men in the grass."

"You are perfectly safe here."

"Then, Clandon, I'm in trouble."

I looked at him without speaking. The surest way to obtain a secret is to evince but slight curiosity concerning it.

"You are not inquisitive?"

"My dear Loh, I rely entirely upon your wisdom."

For a few moments he remained silent, as if cogitating within himself. Then he said: "I am in disgrace."

Here, too, I might have indulged in a little cheap moralizing on the fickleness of princes, but out of deference to his feelings I refrained. At the same time, I was not a little surprised. I should have given the secretary a longer lease of royal favor.

"How did your wisdom let you stumble so foolishly?"

He looked hard at me, lowered his voice, and whispered: "Woman."

This was odd. That a stupid white man should make a fool of himself for a woman was a recognized form of idiocy; but that a philosophic Chinaman should court disgrace for such a worthless cause was enough to make the learned Confucius turn in his grave.

"My dear Loh," I answered, "you disappoint me horribly. Who is the lady?"

"The Princess Me."

"The sister of the Emperor?"

The secretary bowed his head and murmured: "Unhappy Loh."

"And the Emperor knows?"

"If he did, think you I should be alive to answer that question?"

I did not. And yet the Emperor must know something, else how could the secretary be in disgrace?

"He knows nothing for certain," Loh answered, in reply to my query; "but I believe he is growing suspicious."

"Then you are not absolutely in disgrace?"

"No; but I feel that I am tottering upon the verge."

"Then draw back while it is yet time."

"You do not understand. We have met many times in secret. We love

each other. Heaven made us one for the other."

"Tut, tut. What do you know of heaven? The Princess Me is betrothed to Chung, the President of the Board of Ceremonies!"

"But she loathes him! He is old and hideous."

"Not so very old, and not so very hideous. Remember, friend Loh, you look with a rival's eyes. You have been exceedingly indiscreet. The Emperor's word is law. The Princess Me is not for you."

A hot word leapt to his tongue, but with an effort he held it back. An ominous flush swept his brow—the spirit of revolt had risen to blood heat.

"My friend," I said, rising and taking his hand, "be wise. Are you strong enough to pit your strength against the Emperor? I think not. You come to me for advice. I give it, and it proves unpalatable. Yet I beg of you to listen, for it is the friend who speaks. I know not how far this affair has gone, but I beg of you not to let it go farther. You must renounce the Princess."

"I cannot. You do not know. Why, already she—" Then he stopped suddenly and looked confused.

"Tell me nothing," I said, seeing that I dared not be sympathetic. "It is folly for a man like you to ape the puling boy. Why let that vanity of thine set its heart on a star? Go home, friend Loh, and ponder over what I have said, and think not ill of me because I speak harsh words. Good medicine is bitter to the taste."

He went away with bowed head and a face that betokened the keenest disappointment. Like many of my Chinese friends, he came to me for advice much as one would consult an oracle; and when I spoke with the plain tongue of a reasoning man I invariably dispelled the oracular illusion. But, like most people whose interests clash with reason, though the two should go hand in hand, he was profuse in his thanks for my ad-

vice, though I feared he had no intention of carrying it into effect.

The intrigue with the Princess Me was not renounced, as I, knowing the man, really did not believe it would be. Assuming many disguises, he repeatedly saw her, and, undoubtedly, his continued success bred in him a recklessness that conduced to his downfall. One night, disguised as a coolie woman, he was seen to leave the garden of the Princess. The chamberlain who saw him, mistaking him for a thief, seized him. Loh fought furiously, but in the struggle his wig fell off. Aroused by the noise, the attendants came rushing forward, and instantly a dozen menials were in the possession of his secret.

Knowing that the intrigue must now come to the light, Loh, who was released as soon as he was identified, hurried at once to his lodgings and, boldly facing the danger, spent the rest of that night in preparing a memorial to the throne. In this he reiterated his undying affection for the Princess and his devotion to the illustrious Son of Heaven, whose royal clemency he begged. It was couched in the glaringly sycophantic form of such documents, a form calculated to sicken anyone but a king; and not until it was written and rewritten again and again did he justly appreciate the bold step he was taking. Then his nerve failed him, and he thought of flight; but that would mean ruin, perhaps death, to all his family, and his filial piety would not permit him to bring shame upon his honored parents. For, with all their vices, the Chinese have one virtue—they do honor their parents. Of how many nations can we say the same?

With the advent of day Loh forwarded his humble petition to the throne, and all through the long hours that followed he paced his rooms in an agony of expectation. But the day brought no tidings. After a certain hour he knew that no communication would leave the palace. That hour came and passed. He breathed more freely. Afterward he partook of food, the first for many hours.

The next day came and went, and still no word from the throne. Loh's spirits rose. The Emperor had not forgotten the friendship that had existed between them. Perhaps he might even forgive? The secretary saw something like his old face staring at him from the mirror.

But at noon of the third day a court messenger arrived at the door, and into the secretary's own hands bestowed the dread decree. Loh received it humbly, as one who is honored by the imperial condescension; but his face grew very pale, and his dry tongue beat vainly against the dry roof of his mouth. It was his fate. What was his fate?

He examined it closely. He knew that wrapping well—the imperial seal was still intact. A dozen times he made as though he would break it, and a dozen times his trembling fingers failed him. At last, when he succeeded, he found that the package contained no word of writing—nothing but a *silken cord*.

His face blanched to a ghastly whiteness; he staggered back, his hand to his throat, and gasped. Then he tottered to a seat and sat shivering like one suddenly stricken with ague. Loh's sun was about to set.

This Silken Cord was the last mark of the Emperor's favor. It meant that the secretary was to die, but it allowed him the great honor of taking his own life—an honor permitted only the highest in the land. Strangulation, insuring, as it does, an un mutilated body, necessarily insures an un mutilated soul; whereas decapitation, mutilating the body, also mutilates the soul, and causes an inexpressible amount of confusion in the other world, where mutilated souls are constantly rushing about in search of their own heads.

Being a true Chinaman, and well grounded in the traditions of his race, he could not look upon this wordless message as anything short of an undeserved mark of imperial favor. To be permitted the privilege of taking his own life showed in what remarkable esteem he was held by the Em-

peror. Therefore, as one in duty bound, he felt much pride in having achieved such eminence in the State. And yet—such was his black ingratitude—he was not sure that he really appreciated the honor at its proper value. The Silken Cord was finely woven, and it would bear his weight to perfection; yet he seemed to entertain an insuperable objection to it. The fact is, he did not want to commit the happy dispatch; ungracious as it may seem, he did not even thank the Son of Heaven for his pretty present.

Yet how could he avoid his fate? He pondered deeply, but no avenue of escape offered itself. Though he fled from the city, he could not take his parents with him, and to leave them behind meant that they would suffer in his place. For Chinese law, or justice, distinguishes little between the individual and his family. If it cannot punish the one, it will the other. Therefore all thought of flight must be abandoned. If he were not the basest of ingrates, he would go down upon his knees and thank the Emperor for his imperial consideration.

And yet, strangely enough, he did not want to die, though given the imperial sanction to die in such a magnificent manner. Perhaps the thought of the Princess Me made him cling foolishly to life; perhaps the thought of the grief of his aged parents; perhaps fear of the annihilation of a certain proud and pleasure-loving soul. Loh was a philosopher, and he saw but vaguely the end of the journey. Yet the hours were creeping on, and he had done no packing. At sunset the emissaries of the Emperor would appear. They must find him swinging by the Silken Cord.

Not having seen him during the two or three days which he spent at home awaiting the reply to his petition, and meanwhile having heard a rumor of what had taken place, I approached an official and made inquiries, and learned the whole story. As the official in question was just

starting for Loh's house to see that the imperial behest had been obeyed, I offered to accompany him, and together we set out.

Arriving there, we found the house in gloom, while the dreary sounds of lamentation vibrated in the air. The father met us at the door, and between his sobbings and his moanings welcomed us to the house of sorrow. His son, the flower of his race, the pride of his life, was no more; but, thanks to the exalted magnanimity of the Son of Heaven, his paragon of filial piety had entered the land of spirits with a head on his shoulders. For such right royal clemency, the heart-broken father felt sure heaven would lay up ten thousand merits for the Root of All Wisdom. Then, sounding once more his dreary note of lamentation, he led us slowly to an inner room, in the middle of which, suspended from a beam, floated the body of Loh.

The clothes were the same as those he had worn when last I saw him, and though I did not scrutinize his face very closely, I shuddered as I thought how hideous death makes a man.

We turned away, fully satisfied that the Emperor's decree had been obeyed, and I sent some kind thoughts after the soul of Loh. Again the weeping father preceded us, proclaiming the virtues of his son and attesting to the magnanimity of the Emperor. Then, as he handed us tea, he favored us with a few particulars concerning the doings of his son before that imperially honored one undertook the disposal of himself; and among other things I learned that just previous to his suicide Loh had paced madly up and down his garden for at least an hour, wildly bemoaning his fate. Indeed, he walked straight from the garden to his room, and, with the cord which the Emperor had so thoughtfully presented, put an end to his miserable life.

Of course, we offered our condolence. It was very sad, yet we all three admitted that the Emperor had behaved in a way that was worthy of the imperial tradition. The star was great, but if it entered into a conflict with

the sun it would be eaten up. But for reasons of my own I asked the father a question or two.

"You said that the lamented Loh went straight from his garden to the room?"

He stopped his sighing, and eyed me with a singularly penetrating look.

"Even so," he answered.

"And that, previous to committing the happy dispatch, he walked in the garden for at least an hour?"

He hesitated a moment or two. Then he said, "Even so, your excellency."

"Poor fellow!" I replied. "Poor Loh! We were excellent friends."

At this the fond father burst once more into tears, in the midst of which we left him. As we walked along my companion turned to me and said, "What made you ask those questions about the garden?"

That was the worst of a man in my position. To those who knew me, my every word, my every action, had some hidden meaning.

"You must not forget that Loh was a close friend of mine, and that my grief for him is only exceeded by my reverence for the Emperor."

But what I really saw was the pair of *new* shoes that the suicide wore—shoes absolutely *unsoiled*—and I wondered how he could have walked in his garden for an hour without soiling them.

But I had sufficient reticence to keep the thought to myself. The man beside me, court creature and sycophant, would have made much of my suspicions, and probably would have reaped extraordinary credit for a little ordinary acumen. In such a state of society he who was the last to gain the august ear had the best chance of preferment. Moreover, this man was quite satisfied. He would duly certify that with his own eyes he had beheld the Secretary Loh hanging by his neck. Equally so would I. Then why set the calm mind throbbing with suspicion?

And after all, what was there in this suspicion? It is true that if Loh from his garden had gone and straight-

way hanged himself, his shoes must have shown the wear and tear of walking. And yet, who was to say that he had not changed them and put on a new pair for the journey? A Chinaman prefers to die well dressed. He must make an excellent first appearance in the next world.

Yet, unexpected, the thought had come, and, having arrived, it seemed extremely like making a long stay. My mind was ill at ease. I would have given a good deal for the permission to further examine the body. I would have gone back then and there if I could have done so without arousing the suspicions of my companion. Even when I tried to break away he insisted upon my journeying with him to the palace, at the gates of which we separated.

I at once retraced my steps to Loh's house, and was again greeted by the sorrowing father. Could I look once more upon the face of my beloved friend, the pride of his race, the flower of manhood, the soul of chivalry? The father wept copiously, but amid his tears I learned that Loh had been taken down, that the coffin had already closed upon him, and that he would be buried secretly, as one who had died a shameful death. Expressing my deep regret at not being able once more to gaze upon the face of my friend, I took my departure, my suspicions not in the least allayed. It was evident that Loh was not appreciated above board.

From a personal point of view, his case interested me deeply, and for some considerable time, in one form or another, I devoted much attention to his particular domicile. But nothing coming of it, I began to make inquiries concerning the Princess Me, and I learned that she was practically a prisoner in her own apartments, her royal brother and lord being undecided how to punish her. It was said that her marriage with Chung was broken off, as the Emperor had judged her unworthy of an alliance with that exalted official; but what the facts really were no one appeared exactly to know. Only one thing

was certain: the Princess Me was in disgrace.

One day, as I lounged beside the gates that led to the women's quarters, I saw a coolie woman, her face half-smothered with a big bonnet, come staggering along beneath a huge bundle that she carried on her head. The bundle, being soft, hung almost to her shoulders, so that I got but an indifferent glance at her as she passed me. I saw her look my way, and as quickly turn again—almost too quickly for one who would avoid suspicion. I watched her through the gate, and then advanced to the guard.

"Who is that coolie with the bundle?"

"The Princess's washerwoman, excellency."

"A strapping wench," said I, giving him a meaning look.

He smiled. "Quite hopeless. I have tried."

"She is an old hand?"

"On the contrary, excellency, she has only been coming here two weeks."

"How often does she come?"

"Twice a week."

I smiled as I whispered, "Courage, my brave soldier."

He said something, but what, I don't remember, for my eyes were following the washerwoman as she approached a bend in the path. Would she look round? Something told me that she would, notwithstanding a cold, calculating mistrust of conjecture. And yet the intuition proved correct. As she rounded the bend the great bundle on her head slowly turned. I knew that the quick black eyes were looking back.

I walked away from the gate feeling the best of friends with myself, and all because a coolie woman had honored me with a glance of her black eye. In fact, I had already made up my mind to see more of her, and with that intention I took my seat at the window of a restaurant that commanded a view of the gates, and ordered something to eat. And yet the meal was cooked, eaten and paid for,

and the second cigar half-way smoked before my patience was rewarded.

She came toward me, a somewhat similar bundle on her head, and as she approached I saw her quick, comprehensive glances shoot from side to side. That she did not see me I felt certain; but from my coign of vantage I could see without being seen. When she had passed I went out into the street and followed her.

For a long time I was in doubt as to whether she knew she was followed or not, and this rather undermined the foundations of the imaginary edifice that I had so laboriously constructed. It was obviously natural that a coolie woman who had no secrets would never dream of doubting her own insignificance. Such a woman would march straight on to her goal, never turning to right or left. And this was exactly what this woman did, striding sturdily forward as though oblivious of all the world. My doubts began to multiply like a ready reckoner. I was beginning to feel glad that this was not an official mission.

Hitherto the woman had been making for one of the poorer parts of the city, but now she suddenly turned to the left and shot off at an acute angle, I after her. Through many streets she led me, now up, now down, and yet always nearing one point. That point was Loh's house. She approached it without hesitation, but instead of entering at the front door, made her way round to the back. A high wall enclosed the garden in which poor Loh had taken his last earthly walk.

By this time it was almost dark, and as the woman fumbled with the gate I advanced noiselessly and laid my hand on her shoulder. She sprang back with a slight exclamation, and instantly a knife flashed in the twilight.

Stepping back with a smile, I said: "Why so suspicious, my moon-faced divinity?"

"What do you want?" she answered, in a low voice, a voice that quivered with agitation.

"Merely to see your pretty face. I

have come far, stimulated by the breath of hope." She turned and, without speaking, began to fumble at the lock. "You are not inquisitive," I continued; "you do not ask how far. Let me tell you: from the gate that leads to the apartments of the Princess Me—the Princess Me for whom my good friend Loh committed the happy dispatch. Is it not a little curious that the woman who washes for the Princess should also wash for *his* parents?"

The woman stopped fumbling with the gate and faced me, apparently gaining courage from the growing darkness.

"You have dogged me? You are a spy?"

"And if I admit as much?—what then?"

"I say that you are a dog of the street, to be kicked and beaten."

"And yet it is possible that you would regret doing either, for when a dog is kicked he sometimes turns and bites. But this dog is of another breed. He likes to do good, to sound the alarm when danger approaches. He is not a very wise dog, but he is just a little bit wiser than the other dogs about him."

"Your words are strange," she said, "but your tone is friendly."

"I was the friend of Loh—I am the friend of all on whom the world frowns. It is not in accordance with established wisdom that the washer-woman of the Princess Me should come, even by a roundabout way, from the palace to the home of her lover. If the official blockheads knew, even they might suspect something. For I must tell you that though Loh walked direct from his garden to the room in which we found him hanging, the shoes the dead man wore were absolutely *new*. Most remarkable indeed! He might have changed them, of course, only he didn't. Luckily, the official who was with me did not notice such a trifling detail. If he had, he might have examined the dead man more closely."

The woman was silent for a mo-

ment or two. Then she said, "You speak like a friend. What would you advise?"

"You run great risk in visiting the Princess, because somebody may presently trace the connection between this house and the palace. Doubtless you have a sweetheart? Try and persuade him to go with you to Hong Kong. There you will be under English law, beyond the reach of the Emperor and all his mandarins."

In a moment the woman was on her knees before me, kissing my hands and murmuring broken words of devotion. And then my fingers curled round hers in a hearty grip.

Having sown the seeds I left time to ripen the harvest, and it ripened with a quickness that was truly abnormal. Within a week the news spread among us officials that the Princess Me was missing, and my in-

ability to discover her whereabouts has always been used against me by my enemies. But about three months after, the Princess having been given up for dead, I received a curious epistle from Hong Kong, which purported to be the account of a man who had received the Silken Cord from the Emperor, but who had so far disobeyed the Son of Heaven as to purchase a substitute, which he did for a very reasonable sum. But though the real offender had played his game with extreme ingenuity, he overlooked the fact that a man cannot walk in his garden without soiling his shoes. In a kind of postscript was the added information that a certain coolie washerwoman had prevailed upon her sweetheart to accompany her to Hong Kong.

Notwithstanding the sneers of my enemies, I really do believe I know what became of the Princess Me.



THE PIPE SPEAKS

I AM the censer of desire,
And you the acolyte, who swings
Th' enchanted mystery of fire
About whose soul my incense clings.

At my command her flying web
Bright Fancy weaves in pattern free;
And as the heart's tides flood or ebb,
So change the visions I decree.

I am imagination's wand;
Before me all the shadows flee.
The sun breaks through; and lo! beyond,
A phantom land of mystery.

Glad memories in golden stream
Flow down the channels I devise;
I am the dreamer and the dream—
And I the end the dream implies.

LIN LEYMAN.



ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

HE—I'm a better man for kissing you.

SHE—I'm glad to know it, George; still, I feel sure you are not yet prepared to die for me.

OVERHEARD ON THE OUTSIDE

By Charles Battell Loomis

THE OUTSIDE BARBARIAN

WHAT is this chattering noise
that we hear?

HIS GUIDE

It is the audible part of a five o'clock
tea.

O. B.

What makes the noise?

G.

Forty-five women, feebly assisted by
five men.

O. B.

What are they talking about?

G.

Nothing that would call for a second
edition. It is called small talk, but it
makes a good deal of noise for its
size.

O. B.

Who is the high-browed man in the
corner with the business suit on, who
is looking as sad as he can, and who
has not spoken since the last young
woman got away?

G.

He is not in Society, but his cousin
Alexander is, and he was brought
around to this, his first afternoon tea,
by permission of Mrs. Van Derpent.

O. B.

Who is Mrs. Van Derpent?

G.

She is at home this afternoon, and
this is her tea.

O. B.

But why is the young man so sad?

G.

Why, his thoughts have fled, al-

though when he is with his own kind
he is a ready and a wise talker.

O. B.

Who are his own kind?

G.

The three A's: artists, architects
and authors.

O. B.

What did the young woman who
was talking to him say?

G.

She said: "Don't-you-dote-on-the-
opera - isn't - it - a - shame - that - Jean-de-
Reszké - did - not - come - over - this - year -
isn't - 'Die - Walküre' - perfectly - stun-
ning?" These three she gave him
hot from the bat, and it naturally
dazed him. In a little while he will
go to get a cup of tea at his cousin's
suggestion, although he would much
rather have beer, and when the pretty
young woman who is pouring asks
him "Milk or lemon?" he will say,
"An orange, please," just because he
is rattled.

O. B.

Poor young man!

G.

When he finally understands, he
will spill his tea on his knees, but the
pain will be as nothing to the mental
torture that this estimable young man
is undergoing.

O. B.

How cruel in his cousin to bring
him to this place!

G.

Quite so. And yet there are hun-
dreds of young men in town who
would give their month's salaries to

get cards to Mrs. Van Derpent's afternoons.

O. B.

But won't the young man get over his fright?

G.

Yes; by-and-by he will meet a girl who will talk to him about architecture—he is an architect—and then he will forget that he is in Society, and will talk with a fluency and a lucidity that will charm the girl who has a soul above five o'clock teas. But do not think that his torture is at an end. Just as he is quoting something from Ruskin, and the girl is drinking it in, Mrs. Van Derpent will drag him off and present him to a giddy young thing who will ask him if he doesn't think golf, Dooley and Harding Davis perfectly lovely, and the young man will again be

knocked silly because he has learned none of these games.

O. B.

But is there no escape?

G.

Oh, yes; as soon as he can get his cousin away from the bevy that he is entertaining with infinitesimally small talk he will make his escape, and he will run to a side street and whoop for joy that he is delivered from his thraldom.

O. B.

And will he go there again?

G.

He? Of course not. He has been plunged into Society without being drowned, and he will not go near the water—or tea—again.



IN CENTRAL PARK

IN Central Park, in softened guise
 The children's happy, gladsome cries
 Blew o'er the meadow's verdant sheen.
 High midst the branches all unseen
 The squirrel chattered o'er his prize.

In glinting lake and tender skies
 I found the color of your eyes,
 And took new pleasure of the scene
 In Central Park.

And you, my love, all nature-wise,
 Found fresh delight and new surprise
 In every leaf and blade of green;
 And never knew, nor cared, I ween,
 That I that day found Paradise
 In Central Park!

RICHARD STILLMAN POWELL.



ALWAYS THE SAME

MAUDE—Chappie always looks fresh.

BELLE—Yes; Chappie is no hypocrite.

THE WICKEDNESS OF MATSU

By Onoto Watanna

YUKI folded her hands and pitifully drooped her head. She was converted. Behind her, Matsu smiled beneath her affected frown, and the minister coughed slightly.

"You, Yuki," he said, with fatherly graciousness, "shall accompany us. I feel we shall have cause to be proud of you. And you—" He turned to Matsu, and cleared his throat. Her eyes were meekly drooped also now, and her hands folded, though, unlike Yuki, she had not fallen on her knees. As the minister paused, her lips moved, and she said, with the queerest intonation:

"Me?"

"You are hardly yet prepared," he said, gently.

The eyelids flashed up. There was a prayer in the depths of the dark eyes.

"A-a, *ple-ease*, excellency, me also," she said, dragging her words pleadingly.

The minister's composure vanished. He tried to look severe, and kept his gaze resolutely averted from the little upraised face; then his eyes encountered one beseeching little hand outstretched, and he fluttered.

Yuki finished her prayers and rose to her feet, turning a reproachful look on her friend. To the minister she said: "Matsu nod understand' to be good." This very apologetically, and with a resigned shake of her head.

"Me?" said Matsu, with superb passion. "Am good—mos' gooder'n all."

"Then why you nod pray?" demanded Yuki, "an' also why you nod baptize? An' also why you nod b'long

ad thad church of Jesu Christ an' Sav'or?"

"Hah!" said Matsu, with vehemence, "tha's account I *too* good!" She caught her breath guiltily and stood confessed.

"I nod mean thad," she said, pitifully, but it was no use. Yuki was glad Matsu had betrayed herself. She went off slyly smiling, and left the minister and Matsu in the Mission house alone. It was dark inside, and the gloom of the place made the girl shiver. She looked out wistfully to where the half-opened door let in a stray gleam of the fading sunlight. The minister pushed the door wide, and they passed out together and walked side by side toward the crest of the little hill on which the Mission house stood. It was not the first time they had together watched the sunset.

The United Missionary Society had quite recently requested the return to America of the minister, and had also authorized him to bring back with him to America two of his subject-converts. Now both Yuki and Matsu had been adopted by the Missionary Society since they were little children, and had grown up in it. Yuki, meek, submissive, sweet, pretty and passive, was the pride of the entire Mission, but Matsu was as far from the Cross as the day they had taken her in, a hungry, forlorn, fighting little morsel of humanity, clad in rags and dirt, whom one of the workers had found in the streets. No one had ever taken the trouble to find out who she was or to whom she belonged. It was the custom of the Mission house to take in such waifs, and moreover, it was an

easier matter to educate these children and bring them up in the Christian faith than it was to make converts among those who had ingrained into them, and were satisfied with, their own older religion. But Matsu was, unfortunately, untrainable, and, although a product of the Mission school, reflected discredit on that worthy institution, and it was the custom of the workers there to keep her out of sight on the occasion of visits from sundry foreigners who sought to investigate the work of the Mission. Had it not been for the minister, who had been moved from Osaka to Kyoto a year before, Matsu would have been turned adrift, for she had arrived at the age of fifteen, and it was the judgment of the missionaries that, since she could not be brought to conform to their belief, she should not be permitted to remain in the school, where her radical ideas and opinions were anything but conducive to discipline.

But the minister had acquired a peculiar fondness for the little maid. She exercised a strange influence over him, and while he sternly disapproved of her naughtinesses and recognized to the full the evil effect on the other children likely to result from her association with them, he was in the habit of shielding and even concealing her failings from his associates. Moreover, he never attempted to argue with her, or even to teach her, and in this way really had more influence over her than if he had done so. She would go to him and confide to him her little troubles, her thoughts, her queer fancies.

The minister knew his fondness for Matsu was in a measure perilous, for though no one else had perceived anything out of the ordinary in his friendship for her, the girl herself was cunningly well aware of it, and selfishly worked upon his weakness. Now her heart was set on going to America, and she was using all her wiles and smiles and witcheries with that end in view. It was really a serious crisis the minister was facing now. Much as he would have liked to take Matsu

with them, he was yet seriously affected by the idea of what the result would be if she, with all her wilfulness and mockery and defiance, was sent as a type of the convert from the Mission school.

As they walked along slowly together he debated within himself.

"No," he said, suddenly stopping. "It is out of the question, Matsu."

"Please, excellency!"

"No. Don't beg like that, Matsu," he said, nervously. "It's no use. You must understand, you ought to, how—how absurd it would be, how it would hurt me, in fact. You wouldn't want me to get into trouble, would you, Matsu?" he asked, softly.

She shook her head, and then suddenly caught at his sleeve, her eyes shining with a quick inspiration.

"Bud—sup-pose I *gitting* convert-ed?" She put it to him seductively.

He gasped.

"Ah, that would be different, then, little girl," he answered, quickly, and looked stealthily at the alluring little hand, that had somehow found its way into his. He wondered at its power of expression. Her eyes danced now.

"I am convert!" she declared, promptly.

"*You*—now?" He began laughing, and she, encouraged, joined with him joyously.

"Yaes; see me? I am convert, so—so," and she dropped on her knees and began imitating Yuki's pose to a nicety. Her lips moved, she clasped her hands, she raised her eyes to heaven.

The minister went pale. This was too much.

"Don't do that," he said, sharply, and lifted her to her feet almost roughly. Then he began speaking quickly, jerkily.

"It's no use. You do not—you could not—understand the real spirit of the religion. You would disgrace not only me, but the Mission work here. They will ask you all sorts of questions. They are only too glad to find a flaw in one's work and pull it to pieces over there. You would be an excellent card for them, and would

play into their hands. Why, you don't understand all it means. You can't go, Matsu. You mustn't."

"God-A'mighty!" the girl said, tragically; "whad I done?"

He stared at her hopelessly.

"Where did you learn that?"

"Thad 'God-A'mighty?'"

He nodded.

"You!" She laughed triumphantly now.

"I did not use it in that way," he said, flushing a dark red. But she nodded vehemently.

"Jus' like thad—when you angery."

"Angry?"

"Yes, with thad priest wot criticising you nize worg. 'Member? I hearing you like this," and she mocked him with exaggeration.

He frowned uncomfortably.

"Tha's bad?" she questioned, demurely, peeping at him with her head cocked on one side.

"It isn't good," he said, shortly.

"So?" She was thoughtful a moment, and then: "Sa-ay, you nod sending me at America account I nod good? Well, also why you sending therefore you, you-ownself?"

He stirred miserably under her accusing, quizzing eyes.

"Oh, you're right," he said, disheartenedly, for he was out of sorts. "I don't amount to much, Matsu, and the fact is, I don't want to go; but I'm under marching orders, you see."

"Marching orders? Say, why *you* don' putting *me* under them same marching orders?"

She came round to the front of him and peered up into his face. Her head reached to his chin, and he was conscious that her hair was perfumed with a faint, subtle odor that was delightful.

Someone came swiftly up to them, and he heard the high, nasal voice of Miss Johnson from the Mission school.

"Oh, Mr. Brandon, you are wanted. There's a meeting at eight, and they want you a little in advance—" She stopped short and stood staring at Matsu in speechless, suspicious horror.

"Matsu! where did you get that dress? and why are you dressed like that?"

The girl laughed defiantly, even as she retreated.

The gown was extravagantly beautiful and of the richest quality of silk. She smoothed it daintily and caressingly.

"I geisha girl now," she declared, "an' I kin danze—so!" She executed a few steps.

Miss Johnson turned on the minister.

"I knew it would come to this," she wailed, "after all these years. We might have expected it. She has been at her tricks again—deceiving us! It will hurt the other girls, our dear, pure-minded Christian girls."

"I nod tricking you," broke in Matsu, savagely. "Tha's nod wigged danzing. Tha's mos' nize of all. You thing I go worg ad thad factory gitting my hands all so dirty and sore? No; I *nod!*" she declared, passionately.

"You could have followed some worthy trade. You could have even taken up the mission work, if it hadn't been for your wicked nature. And it was only last night Yuki told us that you had declared yourself converted."

Matsu shrugged her shoulders fiercely. "I bagsliding!" she said.

The minister spoke to her gently. "You would better come back with us for the present," he said.

"You taking me at that America?"

"That is—impossible."

She turned quickly and ran down the hillside.

The preparations for the departure of the party went on slowly. Another girl and Yuki had been chosen to accompany the minister, and the unselfish workers at the Mission willingly made ready for them a comfortable little wardrobe that would stand them in good stead in America. The minister was ill at ease, and absent-minded. Since the day when she had run away from them nothing had been seen of Matsu. The teachers

had unanimously agreed that she was really past redemption. No effort was made to find out her whereabouts; and, in fact, they one and all declared that it was, after all, just what they might have expected of her. They had had somewhat similar experience with all the half-caste children—they were unstable, unreliable, incapable of restraint. But the minister said little. He had acquired a habit of going down into the city after his work was finished and frequenting the different tea-gardens and dancing places. There was no sign of Matsu, and he worried so much over her loss that he grew thin and haggard from sleeplessness.

It was a couple of nights before their departure that, as he was entering his house, he felt someone pull his coat tail, and, turning quickly, he encountered the sharp, defiant eyes of Matsu. He was so relieved and overjoyed at seeing her that he almost shouted. She clung to his hand as he drew her indoors.

"Well, Matsu?" was what he said, after a moment, and then, as she seemed loath to speak, he prompted her: "Where have you been?"

"Me? Oh, jus' liddle bit visit."

"Where?"

"Where? Let me see——"

"Tell me the truth, Matsu."

She laughed hysterically.

"I bin danzing," she said, drearily.

"And you don't like it? Prefer the peaceful life here?"

She caught her breath with a sob.

"I like go at America," she said.

"Why?"

She still tightly clasped his hand with both her small ones.

"Ah, to be with you," she breathed.

After that they stood in silence, and the minister closed his eyes. Her confession had startled his blood deliriously. No one in all his life had

ever cared for him in that way before. The girl regarded him wistfully.

"You got already 'nuder wife?" she inquired, anxiously; "mebbe two, three, 'leven, one hundred wifes?"

He shook his head, smiling faintly at her imagination, which was always so vivid.

"Why you nod marry with *me*, then?" she asked, and went closer to him.

He put his two hands on her shoulders, and held her off.

"Listen, Matsu, and look at me, too. See, I am years older than you are—past forty, in fact, and you a little girl of fifteen. Then, too, you are pretty, very pretty, Matsu, while I—well, you see, dear, I am a very plain, homely man—ugly, perhaps."

She denied this vehemently.

"You mos' beautifulest gen'lemans in all the whole worl'."

He laughed joyously.

"Well, you're the only person who ever thought that, Matsu. In fact, I don't suppose anybody ever thought long enough about me to bother over that question. Then, too, I am poor, quite poor, with barely enough for independence, while *you*—remember that Jap fellow that used to haunt the Mission house, and *you*? What became of *him*, Matsu? *He* had money to burn, and, well, you know he came to me and wanted you for his wife; in fact, said he was willing to become a convert if I'd let him have you."

"Why he don't burn his ole money?" she asked, scornfully. "Me? I don't want."

They were silent for a moment after that, then the minister drew her a little closer to him. "You're too good for me, little girl," he said, looking down into her eyes. "There's nothing to *me*, in fact, except——"

"Except?" she repeated.

"That I love you, Matsu-san," he said, softly.



A PAIR OF THEM

By W. J. Lampton

(*Telegram.*)

MISS MARIE WEST,
BOSTON:
Will arrive at eight this
evening and call at eight-thirty.

JOHN S. SHELTON.

(*Telegram.*)

MR. JOHN SCHUYLER SHELTON,
NEW YORK:
Don't. I shall not be at home.

M. WEST.

(*Telegram.*)

MISS MARIE WEST,
BOSTON:
Will you be at home this evening?
ELIOT MONET.

(*Telegram.*)

MR. ELIOT MONET,
PROVIDENCE, R. I.:
Very sorry, but am going out.
MARIE WEST.

(*Telegram.*)

MISS MARIE WEST,
BOSTON:
Can you come out to a Welsh rabbit
and some men this evening?
HARRIETTE.

(*Telegram.*)

MRS. HARRIETTE SNOW,
BROOKLINE:
Awfully sorry, but have an engage-
ment.

MARIE.

(*Telephone.*)

"Is that you, Marie?"
"Yes. Who is it? Fannie?"
"Yes. Can you go with us this
evening to the theatre?"
"Awfully sorry, but I have an en-
gagement, and I can't break it."
"Is Jack coming over?"

"Of course not. I telegraphed
him this morning I would not be at
home."

"Oh, is that so? You've thrown
him over for good, then?"

"For good and forever, I hope."

"Well, I'm glad of it. I never did
think he was half good enough for
you. I'll come over to-morrow and
we'll talk it to a finish."

"Don't come sooner than eleven.
I have to go down town at ten. Can't
you come to luncheon?"

"Yes; that will be the very thing.
Good-bye. So sorry you can't go with
us this evening."

"So am I. Good-bye."

(8:30 P.M.)

MR. SHELTON: "Good evening,
Sophie. Is Miss West at home?"

MAID: "No, sir; she's out, sir."

MR. SHELTON: "I supposed she had
returned. I saw her at Miss Parker's
on my way up, and she told me that
she would meet me here in half an
hour. I'll just come in and wait for
her. Tell her, please, when she
comes that I am in the library."

MAID: "Yes, sir."

(*Upstairs.*)

MAID: "It's Mr. Jack, Miss."

MISS WEST: "Who, Sophie?"

MAID: "It's Mr. Shelton."

MISS WEST: "Didn't you tell him I
wasn't at home?"

MAID: "Yes, Miss, but he said he
had seen you at Miss Parker's and
you had told him you would meet
him here in half an hour, and he
would come in and wait."

MISS WEST: "Um—he is somewhat
of a prevaricator himself, it seems."

MAID: "Beg pardon, Miss."

MISS WEST: "Nothing, Sophie. I'll go around to the front door, and when I ring you come down and let me in."

MAID: "Yes, Miss."

(At the Front Door.)

MISS WEST: "Has anyone called, Sophie?"

MAID: "Yes, Miss."

MISS WEST: "Who?"

MAID: "Mr. Shelton, Miss."

MISS WEST: "Where is he?"

MAID: "In the lib'ry, Miss."

MISS WEST: "Very well, I'll be up in a few moments."

MAID: "Yes, Miss."

(In the Library.)

MISS WEST (*laying off her wraps*): "Good evening."

MR. SHELTON: "Good evening, Miss West. So you were really out?"

MISS WEST: "Yes, at Miss Parker's."

MR. SHELTON: "I didn't see you there?"

MISS WEST: "Were you there, Mr. Shelton?"

MR. SHELTON: "Yes, I stopped on my way up to leave a message for Miss Fannie."

MISS WEST: "Indeed?"

MR. SHELTON: "Yes, quite indeed."

MISS WEST: "Did you receive my telegram?"

MR. SHELTON: "No; did you receive mine?"

MISS WEST: "No; did you telegraph?"

MR. SHELTON: "Yes."

MISS WEST: "What a coincidence, Mr. Shelton!"

MR. SHELTON: "Remarkable, Miss West."

(*Lull of one minute.*)

MISS WEST: "Jack, aren't we very silly?"

MR. SHELTON: "Aren't we a pair of fibbers, Marie?"

MISS WEST: "We are, Jack."

MR. SHELTON: "And we don't love each other at all, do we?"

MISS WEST: "Not at all."

MR. SHELTON: "And we will not be married in June, will we?"

MISS WEST: "Never!"

MR. SHELTON: "We are, indeed, darling, a pair of them."



A DAUGHTER OF PAN

She piped sweet music on the reedy shore,
Laughing to make the little lizards creep
In changeful stealth; culling the cricket's lore
From marshes where the iris sways knee-deep.

The birds left off their song, struck mute to hear
Their notes repeated through the slender reed;
The bees forgot to drone, in sudden fear
Of stolen sweetness from their honey's mead.

Moved by her piping, in the twilight hour
A daring mortal from his fellows fled.
And clasping close a faded passion-flower,
There on the morrow morn they found him—dead.

CHARLOTTE BECKER.

THE MEDDLER

By Clinton Ross

“WHO is that funny old chap?” asks the visitor.
“Oh, that’s old Tatterly; always around—always everywhere.”

I

A TIME came, though nobody expected it, when Tatterly grew lonely.

One night Whiting was in bad humor, Tatterly decided; and Tatterly had too much tact to say too much to a man so disposed.

Tatterly was not in the best form himself. He felt lonely even here in the club, his home. Where else he lived nobody ever knew; but he had been a member these twenty years, and rarely during that period had he been more than a week away, at somebody’s house, or on somebody’s yacht. He was a man who always filled in at a dinner or a house-party. You never could read a statement of an occasion without seeing Tatterly’s name, while his face was familiar on the Avenue, at the cafés, at the first nights. As for the Peter Stuyvesant, that most proper of clubs, the waiters knew his every foible, and they held him a model. To tell the truth, he was that most admirably endowed creature, your presentable bachelor without an embarrassing relative; and his life was his own.

To tell the truth further, he received two hundred a month from somewhere, had a small hall bedroom, that cost very little, and spent the most of the two hundred on the mess, and a tailor. When he was a bit short, there was always a friend to make him a loan, and those promissory notes

never were pressed. He was your good fellow, with nothing a year and a host of friends, and so for twenty years he had remained, since a college friendship with the Trevors had secured him an election to the Peter Stuyvesant.

And time went on.

He knew everybody and everybody’s private history. Not a celebrity came to town that he did not know about. He had a rare fund of anecdote, which pleased, and gave you knowledge. He could introduce you to anybody, from a wine merchant or a tailor to a banker or a social leader. To be seen with him was in its way a guarantee of position.

To-night, however, Tatterly had that queer sense of loneliness. Walter, the doorman, remarked it as he went out into the night. Tatterly turned up the deserted Avenue, where the cabs were drawn along through the coating of sleet. At the corner of Thirty-second street he paused. The hall bedroom further down that street seemed doubly dreary as he thought about it.

“Too late to do anything,” he remarked. “What can I do? Don’t like the club to-night. Jove! I will go slumming—just a little. It will be something to watch a bit.” So he walked into a hotel and spoke to the clerk, who said:

“Good evening, Mr. Tatterly. Bad night.”

“Hello, Tatterly!” said two men, passing out.

“Just around the corner—a shady place you want. Perfectly safe.”

“Just want to amuse myself, you know,” said Tatterly.

"Tell them Long sent you. They'll know that name. Good night, Mr. Tatterly."

So Tatterly turned into Thirty-third street and down Broadway and finally west, pausing at a door adjoining a pawnshop—a heavy, gruesome oak door, with a brass knocker, that was simply decorative, fastened to the oak, and a bell to the left. Tatterly pulled the bell, which gave no tinkle.

Presently the door was pushed open, and a heavy face, yet with keen eyes, peered over the chain.

"Long."

"A moment, sir."

The chain was loosed.

"In there, the stair to the right. At the top, the left-hand door."

The man vanished into the shadows, and then Tatterly made his way up the heavily carpeted stairs and into a room all still save for impassionate, modulated voices that called out the luck, or the fate of the play. Paintings—a few excellent ones—hung on the walls. Waiters went noiselessly about. Some twenty were there, men in evening dress, rougher looking folk, the faces of gentlemen and of rogues—little clerks and other men "doing the town," and sly, furtive appearing persons.

"Same queer old world," said Tatterly, sighing. "They say poor Jensen dropped a hundred thousand yesterday on Montana and Siberia, and—here it is again, only rather more seamy."

He stood watching a roulette table with a knowing smile, and then his attention became fixed on a young man who was putting five-dollar bills on various numbers. He lost, and kept losing. Tatterly watched him, and put him down "A clerk somewhere."

Presently the young man turned away with an oath and threw himself into a chair in a far corner of the room. A strange impulse drew Tatterly to the corner. He saw the young man reach into his pocket and take out a crumpled bill, and regard it moodily. Tatterly was standing over him.

"I wouldn't if I were you," he caught himself saying.

The other looked up at the tall, thin figure, the great-coat thrown back showing the dinner-coat. He stared two minutes.

"You are right, sir. It's my bad night. But I have to raise some money," he answered at last, without resentment. A quaver of despair was in his voice.

"Don't you know that they can regulate that thing by electricity? I don't say that they do—"

"Oh, I know," the other retorted, "but that's part of the play. If they do, nobody knows exactly how—you gamble on their letting you win sometimes."

Tatterly seemed to see into the young man's mind; he knew he was acting with astonishing queerness, and he said:

"I would make a clean breast of it, if I were you. It's the only way."

"What do you mean?" the young man answered. "Who are you?"

"Oh, I know," said Tatterly. He was sure he knew, as sure as he was that he was meddling.

The other waited a moment, studying the figures in the carpet. Suddenly he looked up at Tatterly without so much as a show of surprise.

"I don't know who you are, or what you know. But you are right—it's the only way."

He rose and buttoned up his coat.

"Nothing seems real to-night. I feel as if I were in a dream."

"So do I," said Tatterly.

The other extended his hand.

"I will do it, sir." And pulling his coat about his ears, he went out, a certain resolution showing in his figure.

"What has come over me?" said Tatterly, and at the moment he heard a voice over his shoulder.

"Why, Mr. Tatterly!"

"Dick! you are slumming, too?"

"I couldn't sleep if I went to bed, so I tried this rum sort of joint."

"You have had enough of it?"

"Yes, indeed."

"Then we will go,"

So Tatterly and the boy, old Whiting's only son and heir, went down the muffled stair and through the oaken door into the dull, sordid street, and over toward the Avenue.

"Thank you for seconding my name at the Peter Stuyvesant," Dick was saying.

"Your father's son; it was a pleasure, you know."

Dick fell silent until, on the corner of Thirty-fifth street, he paused.

"I am taking you out of your way," he said.

"I don't feel like bed yet."

"Nor I. I am deucedly cut up, sir, —awfully."

Tatterly hesitated, and said, slowly:

"Don't tell me, unless you feel you want to."

"Come, I want to tell you, Mr. Tatterly. I have an apartment in the Delldale since—I have had some disagreement with my father."

"H'm," said Tatterly. The same odd feeling was over him as in the House with the Oaken Door.

"Yes, do come. I want to talk with you."

Silently the two went to Whiting's apartment, where Dick found the Scotch. The boy's face was flushed, and Tatterly thought he was not himself.

"You see," he blurted out, "I am going to marry, and my father doesn't like it."

"They don't always," said Tatterly, in a dry tone.

"But because a girl is on the stage—" Whiting began.

"Oh!" said Tatterly. But he didn't add "the deuce," only, "She's nice, I dare say."

"She is an angel. She had to go on the stage to earn money. She's a celebrity of her kind," the boy added. "But nobody can say a word against her—nobody."

"You wouldn't care to give your name—it's a fine name, Dick—to a person anybody could."

"Of course not, sir," young Whiting exclaimed. "But she is Betty Maurice."

"Oh," said Tatterly; "oh, I see."

Betty Maurice was the new dancer the town was talking about.

"Yes, she is pretty, and graceful," Tatterly commented, slowly.

"She is more than that," Dick cried.

Tatterly watched him closely and tried to change the subject, but the boy always reverted to it.

"Well," said Tatterly at last, "it's too bad. Your father will cut you off."

"I can work."

"Yes," Tatterly commented, "you can work; but it's hard business."

"Fellows in England marry girls from dance-halls."

"Yes; but don't they lose caste—among the people you most like to know?"

"I don't care for people."

"But," Tatterly went on, "it will be hard on her. I don't doubt for a moment your father will cut you off with a penny."

"Yes, he certainly will," the boy agreed.

"And she can earn more than you."

"But I sha'n't allow her to dance any more."

"And she will want gowns, and a maid, and good quarters—the things she has danced herself into, you know," Tatterly went on.

"You, too, are turning against me!"

"No, no; let me think about it," Tatterly expostulated.

"She is clever. She makes the girls you know seem stupid."

"Of course, of course she does," Tatterly said, putting on his coat. "This—Well, Dick, I will think it over."

In the street Tatterly said to himself, "That oaken door seems to have passed the evening away. I will never go into such a hole again. Can't see what possessed me to do it—except restlessness. And here's a situation. What was that in the story?—oh, I remember. I seem to have put myself in the position of the *Major* to the boy's *Pendennis*."

He turned into Thirty-second street

and up the steps to the hall bedroom.

Tatterly breakfasted at the Peter Stuyvesant at ten-thirty. You could tell the minute from his entrance into the breakfast-room. His eggs and coffee were always waiting at that moment, from year's end to year's end. This morning he turned to Paul, the waiter, with "Have them call up the Woffington Theatre, and tell them that if Mr. Lorsley, the manager, is there, Mr. Tatterly wishes to see him."

Tatterly saw Lorsley, for Lorsley was always glad to please a well-known man-about-town. The caller explained that he had a friend—under a whisper he mentioned a prominent name—who had written a libretto that Miss Maurice might use.

Lorsley thought of the name, and its advertising value. The libretto might be whatever you pleased. The name of the author would be as great a drawing card as that of the earl who at that time was playing a minor part at one of his theatres.

Accordingly, the following afternoon, at four, Tatterly's card was presented at Miss Betty Maurice's apartments in a certain hotel and he was admitted.

The visitor found himself saying, "Jove! I don't blame him."

Betty Maurice was pretty and girlish—she was indeed but twenty, with no hint of the footlights in her appearance.

"She has something of breeding," Tatterly thought.

The talk went on in the usual channels, until: "I used a subterfuge to meet you, Miss Maurice," he said at last.

She looked at him quickly.

"Men seem to think any means excusable to make an actress's acquaintance," she remarked, with a demure smile.

"Surely you can't blame me, my dear Miss Maurice. I am not going to apologize for having taken the name of a certain friend of mine in vain—not at all. But I am here, too, with still another object than that of making your acquaintance."

"Yes?"

"Because you are engaged, I believe, to a friend of mine," he said, bluntly.

"Yes," she said, her gray eyes squarely on his; "yes."

"You know his people don't approve."

"I know that. If I were marrying for money or position, I could marry more than he can give me. But—" Tears were in her eyes. Was this candor, or acting? "I care for him," she ended.

"I know you do," Tatterly continued, "and so you have thought—what you are going to deprive him of?"

"Yes, I know—money! but he will have me." The girl's tone had a ring of defiance.

Tatterly made a gallant retort, the precise wording of which he did not remember. He was perplexed how to go on; for he thought that she—behind that seeming innocent girlishness—might believe in money and advertisement.

"I don't want you to marry him, for his sake—for your own sake—Miss Maurice. It will be a mistake."

The girl rose and went to the window. When at last she turned, her face was drawn and tense.

"What do you know about me?—you they have sent here. Do you know how I have worked and striven for this little notoriety I have? Do you know what it is to suffer as I have suffered? For I, too, was well born; but in poverty—awful poverty. Isn't my trade of dancing an honorable one—so long as I have kept myself honorable, and—?"

Tatterly fidgeted. The girl's voice—she seemed a little girl to him at that moment—fell low.

"And then I met *him*, and he was so different—so straightforward, so honorable, so true—I couldn't, if I tried, keep him away, for I loved him, Mr. Tatterly."

The room was still. She was again at the window, and she turned as suddenly as before. But now her face, smiling and gracious, was changed, and she said, lightly:

"It is good of you, Mr. Tatterly. Believe me, I will do the best I can for Dick, who is a very good fellow."

"I know you will, Miss Maurice, and I hope you will let me call again."

"Why, I always shall be glad to see you," she returned, politely; and with polite phrases they parted.

Tatterly stopped at a florist's, to send some violets to somebody who was to dine him that week. He felt uncomfortable, and wondered about the girl. He could not blame the boy, after all. What if it were twenty years ago? Sitting in his customary corner, he reflected what a fool he was to meddle with other people's business. "It's the loneliness of that hall bedroom," he decided.

He failed to see the boy for several days, and then in his box he found a scrawl. It ran:

DEAR SIR:

I did not make a confidant of you to have you meddle. You have made her try to throw me over, but I won't let her, you may be pleased to note.

Yours truly,

RICHARD WHITING.

"I made a mess of it—a mess of it," said Tatterly. "This comes from that House with the Oaken Door. Wonder what happened to the other chap, the little clerk I spoke to?" But he never knew.

Dick Whiting married the girl, was disowned, and talked about for a week. The *Globe* printed the pictures of everybody concerned.

And then the town forgot.

II

ONE afternoon, a year later, Tatterly saw old Whiting, who rarely turned up at the Peter Stuyvesant now. He looked old as he crossed to Tatterly and drew him aside.

"I wish I knew who is giving Dick money. He sends me letters, thanking me for sums I never sent him—the young whelp. What does he mean by it, anyway?"

"Mrs. Dick no longer dances, I am told," Tatterly remarked.

"No; why should she? She married a Whiting."

"Let's sit down," said Tatterly, slowly, unbuttoning his frock coat. "You know, I believe I am getting old—felt it some time."

He paused, tapping the arm of the chair with his fist.

"I will tell you, John; I did a queer thing one night last Winter. This place was lonely. I believe you were here, out of sorts. I didn't want to go home—a bachelor gets tired of that sort of thing. I decided I would look up the seamy side, you know."

"Humph!" Whiting remarked, with a smile.

"Well, I ran across Dick."

"In the place you went to, I dare say," the father remarked.

"Oh, we both were only observers, I must tell you.

"Well, that night Dick told me his story. I felt worked up about it, and I saw the girl. She was very pretty, and carried herself well. But I left her feeling that I didn't know her—whether she were acting or not—for she made two different impressions. A little later I had a letter from Dick, telling me I'd better mind my own business. I thought it a good idea. And then the marriage came out in the papers. Well, shortly after I heard she had left the stage. Then I came to this conclusion: She didn't marry Dick for his money, because she had a chance—and I know this to be true—to marry a fellow with more money than Dick ever could have expected. She did not marry him for advertising purposes, for Lorsley, the manager, assured me, to my satisfaction, that her decision was final; he lamented it, but knew her like a book."

For a few moments there was silence, and then Tatterly went on:

"I am an old fool, you will grant, but I haven't a chick nor a relative, and I knew they would get hard-up, though he has a sixty-a-month clerkship. I had some New York Central that my father bought thirty-five years ago. I hypothecated it for a loan and took the liberty of sending him

money from time to time with your name typewritten footing the letter."

"You did, eh?" said Whiting.

"That probably explains the mystery of Dick's letters to you," Tatterly said, slowly. "You see, it was only the accident of his mother being dead that prevented her doing it. I thought, since the loan was one I knew I should get back, that I shouldn't be much inconvenienced; in fact, I was glad to do it."

Whiting rose, walked across the room, and returned.

"How much have you sent him?"

"I believe about seventeen hundred; yes, seventeen fifty. Oh, don't bother. I am in no present need of the money."

"You expect to get the money back from me?" the other demanded, hoarsely.

"Of course," said Tatterly, lighting a cigar. "No hurry about it."

Whiting's face twitched. At last he said, in a very low tone:

"You will have my cheque to-morrow. Now I am going home."

"Well, good-night." Whiting walked to the door and back again.

"They still are living in that place in Harlem?" he asked now, rather cordially.

"Yes."

"What do you say to going up there to-morrow afternoon?"

Tatterly hesitated. "Let me see what my engagements are. What day is Mrs. Trevor's tea? Yes, I will go."

"Say at four."

"That will suit me."

"I will meet you here. Good-night."

"Good-night."

"That thing is settled," said Tatterly to himself. "I'll never bother about other people again."

Digby crossed to him, and, as usual, Digby's red face was bubbling with gossip.

"Heard about Simpkins's divorce?"

"Queer old world," Tatterly was muttering, and then he saw Digby. "Yes, yes; nice piece of scandal, isn't it? By the way, have you heard that Whiting has taken the boy back?"



THE FLOOR WALKER

SUPERB, serene, a paragon of form,
The steed of commerce gallantly he rides;
Yea, as the eagle o'er the darkling storm,
Through all the rumpus gracefully he glides.
His smile is as the dewy bloom of morn,
His frown is as the tempest in repose—
His smile is as the rose without the thorn,
His frown is as the thorn without the rose.

A Chesterfield to them that seek his wares,
A Torquemada unto them behind
The counter, for whose good he prays nor cares;
He is a tiger and a lamb combined
That tiptoes slowly, or with vim and dash,
Unto the music of the slogan—"Cash!"

R. K. MUNKITTRICK.

THE PASSION OF AMARYLLIS

By Eleanor Baird Caldwell

OUR dearly loved Amaryllis was a serving maid. Why had our Amaryll' married the Mexican Joaquin? *Quien sabe?*

Amaryll' had been so well with us—comfortable, and all the back pre-cinct hers. And we loved her—she was us. After the Mexican took her we were not all there.

What had the Mexican to give her? I shrug my shoulders.

Give her? She had a little money, and put up a two-roomed house, unpainted, near the hills.

And there was some over, so nothing was heard for a while.

Then Amaryllis began to do washing. Her husband, Joaquin, sat on the door-step and talked to her in lisping English while she was over the tubs, and luxuriously watched her hang out the clothes. He was a big fellow, and smiling; Amaryll' was slender and lithe. She was also grave and delicate in manner, like a lady.

People said they felt the African in her—I do not know. We had not hired her on those terms.

Gigglety-jaggle, into town, Joaquin's old horse and wagon came, with and for the laundry—that was his part. Joaquin liked pensive driving.

His visits gave him a chance to give the *buenos días* to our new serving-maid. The Mexican's liquid eyes smiled upon her through the rear door as he gently slithered into a bow, with the words, "Wassin' ready, señorita?"

One Spring evening—it was Saturday of the week—Amaryllis waited the return of Joaquin. Everything was tidy; even the vines and growing

things outside had been sprinkled by her industrious hands, and the ground sent up a refreshing coolness. There were no trees near, and only a shanty or two straggling toward the town. The road ran by dark-green orange orchards; the other way were ripe grain fields skirting the mountains.

Amaryll' stood in the doorway, listening; she could not see far along the road, for it was hidden by elevations and trees.

She looked so sweet, so quiet. She was not very young—that is why we had not thought of losing her. Her face was a little tired to-night, a placid, self-contained fatigue. Always Amaryllis had the look of not being out with things—serving them as they came, running parallel with them.

In span with Joaquin, she did the pulling.

She stood at the door until the curve of the new moon showed above the orange groves; then she heard the shackley-rattle of the cart. She started down the road expectantly. In the dimness the driver could not be distinguished. She got quite close—there was no driver.

The old horse had come home alone, but the reins were carefully wrapped about the brake to keep them from dragging.

That night Amaryll' passed alone.

The next afternoon, at four, Joaquin lolled toward the house, carrying the dust of the road. He threw himself on the door-step without looking at his wife. "How do, Amaryll'? I'b been habin' good time. Too quiet here. Spent wass' money," and he giggled sillily.

Amaryll' said: "You'd better clean up, Joaquin." And she began to bestir herself to dust him.

Here ended what might be called Amaryllis's honeymoon.

The outside world saw more of her. She placed herself in readiness for any sort of odd piece of work; still kept at the washing, but took sewing home to do; on occasions of festivity, let herself out as an extra servant, did cleaning, anything not necessitating regular absence from home.

The devoted thing began to look haggard; she labored every second that Joaquin might "hab a good time." And she glided about the table at our good times, oiling our feasts with her perfect service—her subtle, soothing presence. Strange how certain one felt that somewhere, somehow, the African had preceded her—and left his remarque.

Once, when Joaquin had been gone for days, "habin' a good time," he suddenly came in upon Amaryll', who was stitching some little things.

The lazy good-nature of the Mexican had changed into an evil slouch.

"Amaryll'," he said, brutally, "they say you niggä."

Amaryll' replied softly: "No, Joaquin, I'm not a nigger."

"Amaryll', I'm no hab' niggä wife. *Adios!*" and turned to go.

Then Amaryll' ran to him, flung

herself about him. "Oh, Joaquin!" she cried—what a look in the eyes as she raised her face to his! Then she whispered something to him, and pointed to the little things she had been sewing.

But the man squirmed from her grasp, ran to the door and flung back the words: "I'm no hab' niggä bâ-be!" and disappeared.

Then Amaryll' ran madly after, stretching forth her arms, wailing: "Joaquin, Joaquin, don't leave me now, Joaquin!"

Where was our soft Amaryll'? Mad.

Down the road ran the man; after—far after—ran the woman. He gained on her; he came upon a horse tethered by the road, gathered up its rope at a whiff and galloped away.

Then Amaryll' dropped on the ground and bit the dust. She flung it wildly in her hair, she tore her garments, cried to heaven like some savage thing. Strange words rolled on her tongue—words she had never heard—a primitive cry, "Wai-e-la! wai—" and then her hands clutched at her bosom. And all the madness swept at a dash.

The coming mother rose and wept, and gently she went back.

Was ever Madonna like our Amaryll', with little Joaquin tugging at her breast?



JUSTICE

HE stole a glance, a glove, a kiss, her heart;
Was caught and sentenced: "Till Death do you part."



AT THE BASEBALL GAME

DOLLY SWIFT—Why are so many of the girls fairly throwing themselves at young Munniman?

SALLY GAY—Because he is such a good catch, I presume.

THE GIRL WHO WAS TOO BEAUTIFUL

By Helene Hicks

GERALDINE CLEMMENS was unquestionably a beauty.

"A deliciously gorgeous creature," an artist in the smart set said of her.

"The most superb woman in town," old Major Hawkins, of the Colonnade Club, used to remark every time she passed the windows of that famous loafing place on her afternoon drive up the Avenue.

She had been photographed in every variety of pose that modern society approves. She had been painted by several of the most celebrated artists.

In fact, Miss Geraldine Clemmens was famous on two continents for her rare and wondrous personal charms, in spite of which she had passed through the whirl of three seasons in society and was still unwed.

"She must be waiting for a title," people said, as other girls, far less charming, came out, danced through a season or so, and were led to the altar by men of their choice.

"With that wonderful beauty of hers she will be satisfied with nothing less than a coronet, since she already has more money than she can spend."

One Spring, just after the close of her third season, Miss Clemmens was among the guests at a house-party visiting a jolly old manor on a Southern plantation.

The party was composed of clever men and pretty women, and jollity gave wings to the hours.

During the course of one long, dreamy afternoon, when everybody was resting for a dinner-dance in the evening, Kenneth Hurst wandered into the library, a cool, dim apartment banked with books and made comfortable with couches.

He had just discovered one of his famous philosophers and settled down to read, when the sound of feminine voices distracted his attention.

Opening from the library was a nook of shady veranda curtained with sweet-smelling vines, and the door leading thereto was ajar.

Miss Clemmens was reclining in a rug-draped steamer chair upon this small porch, a pale-blue cushion behind her golden head, looking beautiful as ever, as Hurst could see by bending forward slightly.

At her feet, upon a pile of pillows, sat a slip of a girl, a slender, eerie little creature, all nerves and enthusiasm.

The girl clasped her hands ecstatically as she gazed up at Geraldine's glowing face.

"Oh, what wouldn't I give to be as beautiful as you are!"

Miss Clemmens closed her eyes wearily, and a very unlovely expression crept around her mouth.

"You do not know what you are saying," she replied.

"But surely you must realize that you are wondrously lovely?"

Miss Clemmens gave a bitter little laugh.

"Yes, I know. Nobody whom I have met in all the years of my life since babyhood has failed to remind me that I am beautiful. Some women have dear, delightful compliments paid to them; men say they are charming, or clever, or witty, or fascinating, but with me they all stand aghast at my eternal beauty."

"What would you have them do, when loveliness is so obvious as yours?"

"Ah, that is the point; it is too obvious. I force myself upon people at

first glance, and they see the whole of me—mouth, teeth, oval face, Grecian nose, ‘wonderful liquid eyes, a perfectly arched brow, poetical hair like wind-tossed sunshine’—I am quoting now, my dear. In fact, everybody sees so much of me at first glance that they never care to look again. I do not pique their curiosity. I am, as you say, entirely too obvious.”

“And don’t you like to be admired wherever you go, and to have all the men at your feet?”

Geraldine shrugged her shoulders. “That is just the trouble,” she said, passionately. “I have admirers in plenty. Everybody I meet admires me, but not one man out of all the hordes I have danced with since my coming-out party has really loved me. Think of that, little girl! Why, even you, in your first season, have had men in love with you. Think what it is to be a woman, and beautiful, and to know that not one single man cares more for you than he does for the last new picture he buys for his study walls.”

The little maiden looked stunned at this outburst.

“But that is impossible!” she exclaimed. “Everybody says—”

Miss Clemmens broke in impetuously: “Oh, I know it is the popular belief that I am besieged by suitors, overwhelmed with offers from the noblest in the land, while, as a matter of truth, the only man who ever suggested that he would like to marry me was a rotund, middle-aged widower with grown-up children, who confessed that his heart was in the grave with his first wife, but said that he wanted someone at the head of his establishment who would do him credit, and I was the finest-looking woman he had ever seen. That was romance for you!”

“But you are popular. Men pay you constant attentions.”

“It is the fashion to affect me, just as it is the fashion to give dinner-dances; and men send me flowers and beg for dances with just about the same amount of enthusiasm as they accept an invitation to a cotillion. It

is the thing to do, and that is all there is of it.”

“But you are clever, besides being handsome. You are always saying something good.”

“My dear child, men whom I try my best to entertain are so taken up with my eyes and my profile that they do not pay the slightest heed to my conversation. I might as well be uttering the most inane of commonplaces as making myself brilliant, for all they care. I asked a man one evening why he did not laugh at my jokes. ‘I have said three distinctly good things,’ I told him, ‘and you have not deigned to smile. Now, why is that?’

“‘Because you are so beautiful,’ was his sickening response. ‘You are the sort of woman a man wants to look at, not listen to. Let other, plainer women do the talking.’ Now, I ask you, was not that discouraging? I overheard another man say once that he thought he should like to marry me if I were not quite so theatrical-looking; that there was such a thing as being too beautiful for strictly good form. Do you see what a handicap this wretched beauty of mine is? It will ruin my whole life unless I fall ill of a fever and lose all my hair, or spoil my complexion or do something to mar the perfectness of me.”

“Think, though, what a pity that would be!” cried the girl. “Do you really mean to say that you have never had a man desperately in love with you?”

“Never!” emphatically. “If some man would only deign to think of me as a woman instead of a beauty show, and love me as women are loved, I could give him such a return as he would little dream of. They say I am ambitious. How little the people around us know of our real longings! I am ambitious to make some man love me; not a millionaire or a titled fool, but a real man, with fire and strength, and the courage to do and dare all for the woman he regards. Such a man might be rich or poor, high-born or of the people. I could show him that I am not a mere thing

of curves and lines artistically correct, but a living creature with heart and brain, yearning to give and receive affection. Ah! that some such man might discover the soul behind my beauty; how supremely happy he could make me!"

"Whew!" said Kenneth Hurst to himself, as he softly stole out of the library. "They say there is a skeleton of dissatisfaction in everybody's closet, but never before have I heard of a skeleton of beauty."

That evening at dinner he manœuvred to sit next to Miss Clemmens. She appeared as gloriously beautiful as ever, and was gowned in exquisite fashion. Her mood of the afternoon had left no trace. She was as serene and superior as if a distressing thought had never crossed her mind.

Kenneth had always admired her immensely, but as he recalled her impassioned utterances of a few hours before, and then gazed upon her unsurpassable loveliness, he felt stirred far beyond mere admiration. What a woman she was! and she said she had never known love! How alluring was such a confession from one so fair!

He sought her later, out in the star-sprinkled night, where she had wandered a little way from the chattering group on the veranda.

"I have been wondering ever since you left the house who was behind that lighted cigar," she said as he joined her.

"And did you guess anywhere near the truth?"

"If I say 'yes' you will flatter yourself that you are often in my thoughts, and if I say 'no' it will not be truthful. Now, what shall I do?"

Mr. Hurst seated himself upon a very uncomfortable stump of a tree. Miss Clemmens stood close by, leaning against a rustic fence, her white dress shimmering pure against dark blotches of foliage.

"Won't you ask me to be seated?" she smiled.

"Age before beauty," said Kenneth.

"How inconsiderate! I shall go back to the house and leave you alone

out here. Then—well, I dare say you will be frightened of the dark."

"Not nearly so frightened as I am of you, Geraldine."

There was silence an instant, and then:

"Faint heart—" she murmured.

He stopped her there by rising suddenly and clasping her in his arms.

"I love you!" he breathed.

"No, no!" she answered, flutteringly; "it is not true! You don't know what you say!"

"It is true. I have adored you from a distance for months, but not until this afternoon was hope born in my heart."

She drew away from him. "You overheard me—"

"Oh, darling, don't be angry. Everything concerning you is of so much interest, I could not tear myself away when I heard your voice."

"But after hearing—everything, it may be you only pity me."

"Not a bit of it. I am thankful for the marvelous beauty that has kept you for me. Say that you care, Geraldine!"

Miss Clemmens raised her face, which was ethereally lovely in the wan moonlight, and of her own accord kissed him.

"You glorious woman!" he exclaimed, ecstatically. "And to think I am the first man who has ever loved you! It is like finding a new world."

Geraldine was discreetly silent, and perhaps it was the moonlight that painted a curious little smile on her lips.

The engagement was announced that very evening, to the great astonishment of the entire house-party.

Privately, everybody told everybody else that one really could not understand what such a celebrated beauty could see in Kenneth Hurst, who was not at all distinguished, being only an ordinary man-about-town.

Miss Clemmens explained to the eerie girl of the afternoon's confidences that they had been overheard by Mr. Hurst, and the latter, woman-wise, thought swiftly: "I wonder if she knew he was there all the time?"

A BALLADE OF MAY

JEWEL month of the year's bright crown,
 Beauty rose of the earth's forenoon,
 Poets of old have writ thee down
 Butterfly from the frost cocoon,
 Fairer even than fairy June;
 With Early English they all made gay,
 But what did they mean when they strummed this tune—
 "Sing ti-addy-addy-tooloorelay?"

Whether they sighed to a lady's frown,
 Or begged her glove as a lover's boon,
 Bards who harped into great renown,
 Or jested in numbers from wit immune
 Ever anon and late and soon,
 We can understand their "Hey—sing hey!"
 But the old cow died when she heard this rune—
 "Sing ti-addy-addy-tooloorelay!"

"Fol de rol!" in a brocade gown,
 Or sipping sack from a silver spoon
 Deep in the taproom of the town—
 "Honey heigh ho!" by the crescent moon—
 "Falera loo!" over hill and dune—
 All these their jubilant meanings say,
 But at *this* limp line our senses swoon—
 "Sing ti-addy-addy-tooloorelay!"

L'ENVOI

Tell me, Prince Poet none may impugn,
 When they sang their old-time songs of May,
 Why, oh, why, did they lilt and loon
 "Sing ti-addy-addy-tooloorelay?"

KATE MASTERSON.



AN ILLUMINATING QUESTION

HE—She must be from Chicago.
 SHE—What leads you to think so?
 "I overheard him ask her how long she had ever been single at one time."

THE JUNIOR REVOLUTION

By Philip Verrill Mighels

THEY rang the notes from the china saucer-bells with the silver clapper-spoons, and sipped at the steaming tea.

"Henry Rust Archer, you haven't heard a word I've been saying," complained the wife of the man, who was over his head and ears in the morning paper.

"Yes I have, my dear. Ha, ha! Here's a good one: '*Funnyfellow*—'Where are the jokes I sent last week?' *Editor*—'Johnny, have you seen Mr. Funnyfellow's jokes?' *Johnny*—'No, sir; me an' Jimmy read 'em, but we couldn't see 'em!'"

"I don't think it's dreadfully funny, my dear," she replied. Then her voice assumed a serious tone: "Henry, I have made a very important discovery since they persuaded me to join. Are you listening, dear?"

"Ye-es—loin or porterhouse—all the same. Here's another."

"Please don't give me another," she pleaded, and gently snipping the paper from his fingers, she sat upon it plumply. "I didn't say loin, and I didn't say porterhouse, so that proves you cannot read and listen. It is something very serious—about your lack of a Revolutionary ancestor—and I feel compelled to speak."

"I thought the Revolution was over and done," said he, a trifle impatiently.

"But, my darling, its spirit isn't dead—"

"H'm!"

"And since becoming a Daughter, I have learned of a painful duty, which only this very minute I have

made up my mind to perform as a solemn obligation."

"You have? Well, Eunice, pet, I beg you to bear in mind that I am not the British—if the war *has* to be waged anew."

"There isn't going to be anything waged," she replied. "If you'll only help me the matter will soon be settled, firmly and quietly."

He hid himself behind his cup of tea. She waited a moment.

"You don't seem interested at all, or anxious," she observed, at length.

"What?" said he. "Anxious about what?"

"There, I think you are perfectly mean. You haven't heard a word, after all. You never used to treat me so!"

"My darling, I have listened to everything. It's the war you mean, of course. Anxious?—of course I'm anxious—terribly worried. I'm a man of peace. A revolution is a fearful thing. You never can tell whether it's concluded or not—volcano-like—and it's enough to worry anyone."

She sighed. "Your spirit of ridicule, dear—but never mind. I'm afraid I irritate you merely. I never used to—you have said so a hundred thousand times. Perhaps I'd better try to fight it out, bitterly, alone."

"Oh, come, my dear, I really want to know. I'm interested—quite," and he settled himself resignedly.

"I don't believe it," she replied, with a shade of hope, "but the matter is grave, and therefore I need your help."

She spread out a paper on the table. "Now there. You know, of

course, that my great-grandfather was present at the Battle of Bunker Hill?"

"I think I have heard you mention the fact, in a casual manner—a time or two. Played on a whistle, I believe—"

"Henry! Now, I think that's cruel. You *know* he was a drummer of the regiment."

"Well, I believe he was. No particular difference. Let it go at a drummer."

"He was a very brave drummer," she added. "And you once pretended to be very proud indeed of having him in the family. And you know, dearest Henry, the Daughters of the American Revolution have issued my pin, and my name is on the rolls?"

"Yes, I think I may safely say that I do—by now."

"Well, you know descendants of officers take a higher social rank than descendants of mere musket soldiers, everywhere."

"Er—do they? Maybe they do—the matter was never brought to my attention—not vividly."

"I am sorry," she said; "but such is really the case, and so, of course, you can easily imagine how very much higher descendants of officers stand than people whose ancestors never fought at all."

"H'm! Some of us haven't a peg to stand on at all, according to that. But it's all right, my dear, and I'll just go for a walk and think it over."

"Oh, no, please—just a moment. This is only preparatory of what is to come."

"Oh!"

"You—you know, dear—you have often admitted—that none of the Archers fought in the glorious Revolution."

"In shame and sorrow," said he, "I have been obliged to confess the humiliating truth—the degrading truth. But you know, my precious, that I wasn't born at the time."

"Of course you weren't, you dear, brave fellow. And—and now it becomes my painful duty to tell you, dear, that I don't see how we can ever

permit my sister Hope to marry Frank."

"How's that?" he demanded, suddenly; "not permit Hope and Frank—Why, nonsense, my dear; they've been engaged for months! And they love each other devotedly—distractedly!"

"Of course—and that's the painful, dreadful part; but, dearest love, what possible difference can that make in a case so serious? Frank isn't even the descendant of a common musket-man, as you've always said, and Hope is a Daughter of the American Revolution, regularly installed, and is going to have a pin, being directly descended from Nathan Goodenow, a regular drum officer, present at the Battle—"

"But, my darling wife, is Frank to blame for that? Come, come, let us be sensible and let these revolutions and pins and things go to the deuce. You wouldn't break two innocent young hearts on a scheme like that?"

"Oh, Henry, I thought you would help me, instead of making it all so hard, and swearing at your poor little wife in the bargain. I am trying my best to be sensible—you know I always do—and you've called me the most sensible little woman in the world—you know you have; and Hope is my ward. I stand in the place of her dear dead mother. Do you think I could endure, in after years, to have her reproach me for permitting this wholly unequal match? Oh, my duty is plain. It is painful—it is terrible, of course, but should I therefore shirk it? Don't you see that my path is straight and well defined—that I am simply compelled—?"

"No, my precious; I confess I don't—not precisely. I think this business silly—the biggest lot of foolishness and rot I've heard for a year! Duty? No! Meddling—that's what it is—meddling!"

"Oh!" she moaned, reeling. "Silly! foolishness! meddling! Oh, that I should ever hear my darling husband speak like that—to his own little wife, in her great distress!" and she sank into her chair, all but ready to cry.

"Aw—now, I say, Euny, dearest,"

he said, "I didn't mean it to sound like that—I only meant that Frank and Hope—you'd wreck their lives. You know we've made them put it off so long already, and a drummer, you know—"

"I'm a wrecker of lives!" she moaningly interrupted. "I'm a fool and a tyrant—and a meddler! But oh, Henry dearest, I love you still, and you may call me anything you like. I shall love you always."

"Oh, dearest, don't," he coaxed. "I didn't call you a single thing but a dear, sweet, precious little woman, who is beautifully human, and therefore likely to make mistakes with the best—"

"I can bear it all—*anything*—now," she said, and she closed her eyes in bravest resignation.

"My darling," he insisted, "you don't have to bear anything at all. Now, do be reasonable, just for a second. I only say that Frank—"

"Yes—your affectionate nephew, who hasn't a single fighting ancestor—"

"—that Frank—"

"—that you love more than you do—"

"—that Frank and Hope are much the same as you and I."

"What?"

"Yes; if they're to be parted, how am I to stand? I'm loaded, unfortunately, with Frank's same identical peaceful progenitors. I trust you'll not be asking the judge to grant a divorce, on—"

"Oh! Oh!—my head—my heart—divorce! Oh, you—mean to cast—me off!" she gasped. "So this was what—you married me for, with all your words of love—to throw me aside! Yes—I see it all now—to shatter my life—my hopes! No, sir; don't you touch me! Divorce—my husband—"

"Hold on, now, little wife," he cried in desperation. "You're 'way off the track—or maybe I'm crazy; but, for heaven's sake, what on earth are we quarreling about, anyway? I don't want a divorce—I couldn't live without my darling wife—and I only said—"

"Don't, please, say it again," she sobbed, in a stifled voice; "I'll go, dear love—even if it kills me—I'll go home—to Hope."

"But, dearest Eunice, I didn't say anything. Frank can go to the deuce—paddle his own canoe—conduct his own battles! I'm done with the whole concern—you can do what you please with the match. I—I beg your pardon, dear. Forgive me—do."

She merely sobbed.

"Oh, now, dearest, forgive me, please. I am doubtless all in the wrong, and—Frank be hanged! Now come; give me a kiss, and forgive your poor old soldier of peace."

"You said—no—I can't kiss you!—not yet. It's too soon," and she sighed repeatedly. "But I'll—be just—as generous—as you—I'll look—all through the book—again—with you—to see if—we can't—find a Revolutionary—ancestor."

"Oh, thank you, dear. Is that the book?"

"Yes, it is. 'American Genealogy.' And there, there are the A's—and not an Archer on the page."

"No, there isn't," he agreed, and he slipped his arm about her waist, the better to look at the book.

"Now, you see, you have to hunt for your *mother's* father," she resumed, as she dried away her tears. "Do you know his name?"

"Rust—Henry Rust."

"P, Q, R," said she. "Here's the place, R-u-b, R-u-n— Why, here's a Rust—I wonder if he's— 'Captain Henry Rust. . . . A captain in the Revolutionary army. . . . Present at Bunker Hill, Brandywine—' Why, let me think—this couldn't have been—your grandmother's father? 'Children, Henry Rust, Evelina Rust—'"

"My grandmother's name was Evelina."

"Oh! . . . Oh! Why—then—do you think—think this book can possibly be authentic, Henry? Where's my paper? Did I mention Brandywine?"

The Genealogy lay on its back, wide open at the page, while she hunted

rapidly about and found her copy of the record.

"Here it is," she said, in a fever of excitement. "Yes. 'Nathan Goodenow, drummer, served under Captains Strong, Gorham—Rust . . . Why—what does—that mean? Nathan Goodenow served under Captain Rust? Oh,—I—don't believe it. I don't care—I don't believe *that* Henry Rust was ever your ancestor at all!"

"Neither do I," said her husband, cautiously. "He couldn't have been, of course."

"Yes, he was," she cried. "You did that just to make me feel humiliated!"

"I say now, Eunice, that isn't fair. As if I could help it! Hang the luck! I'm not the father of my great-grandfather—I couldn't make him stay at home—I couldn't keep him from rearing a family—I didn't start the blasted, everlasting old Revolution! There, dearest, let us drop the subject."

She was silent, pouting and doubting.

"I was thinking of asking you, a while ago," said he, in a brighter tone of voice, "what sort of a present we should get for Hope and Frank."

"There—there you go," she cried at once, "and after we both agreed the match was off."

"Off?" he echoed. "Did we, dearest? But why? Surely there is no objection now—not—not on the—"

"Oh, he taunts me with it now. That's generous, dear; gloat all you can over your crushed, defeated wife!"

"But, dearest, I only intended to ask your reasons for opposing the match."

"No, you didn't. You intended to flaunt your captain over my poor drummer, for you know that my reasons are always good. They could never be happy. Your nephew would be sure to assume all the airs and descensions of people descended from officers in the American Revolution. He would make the life of my poor little sister simply miserable and wretched. No, it would be really inhuman. I can never consent to such

a very unhappy union! . . . What—what is that knocking?"

"Don't know," said Henry, dejectedly. "I've lost all power of thinking" and aloud he called, "Come in!"

The door swung quickly and closed behind a tall and active young fellow, alert and smiling, who advanced at once.

"Oh!" said Henry. "Morning, Frank."

"Good morning to you both," he answered, brightly. "I'm delighted to see you both appearing so fresh and beaming. Delightful day. I—er—I thought I'd just come around—you know—such a beautiful day—to—er—talk about the—well—about things, you know—Hope and I—"

Henry raised a deprecating hand.

"What's the trouble, Unk?" said Frank in surprise. "You and Aunty Eunice haven't been—discussing the bills, I hope."

"Henry," said Eunice, pleadingly, "do not keep me longer in this terrible condition of worry. Tell your nephew the truth."

"The truth?" said Frank. "Is there anything the matter?"

"Ye-es—there is," said his uncle. "Fact is, my boy, that the match—match, you know—is off."

"Off?" repeated Frank; "the deuce! —well—that—that's unfortunate—very." He sat at the table suddenly and laid his hand on the open genealogical volume.

"Er—you see," said his uncle, awkwardly, "the trouble is that none of the Archers ever fought in the American Revolution—and Hope—well, her great-grandfather did. Wide social discrepancy—can't be bridged." And then, in a desperate aside to his wife: "He doesn't know about the captain—best we can do."

Frank was silent. It was evident to both he was struggling to suppress his rising emotions. His eyes were fastened on the book, and he was reading, in a purely mechanical manner.

"Social—discrepancy," he murmured, hazily; "awkward—'Captain Henry Rust—'"

"Frank—Mr. Archer!" cried Eunice in a sudden excitement, "that book—kindly give that book to me."

"This book?" said Frank, with a mind mysteriously easy to divert, "why, but this is something remarkable. 'Captain Henry Rust. A captain in the Revolutionary army. Present at Bunker—'"

"Frank!" cried his aunt again, but this time she possessed herself of the book at a bound.

"Why, I say, Uncle Henry," said he in surprise, "the book isn't poisonous, I hope? Captain Henry Rust, he's the sturdy old gent you were speaking about. Funny we never knew this record of his. Well, say, this gives me a social standing myself."

"Ye-es—no—no. You see the Archers—the Archers—never fought," said Henry, dubiously. "We—we knew about Rust, of course, but that—that's different."

"Very different, indeed," said his wife. "It is very unfortunate, but it cannot be altered."

"I see," said Frank. "But, of course, inasmuch as my great-great-grandfather was a colonial officer, why, I presume I am entitled to plume myself according to my own deductions."

"Oh, of course," said his aunt; "you will do as you please concerning that."

"Thank you kindly. I happened to see by the paper that the Daughters of the American Revolution are making quite a fuss about placing descendants of officers higher in social circles than the descendants of men who were merely privates."

"What a very un-American practice!" said his aunt.

"Oh, I don't know," said Frank, "but at any rate, Hope—Miss Goodenow—never pretended that what's-his-name, old Nathan Goodenow, was anything more than a splendid drummer—"

"Oh," said Mrs. Archer; "oh, the sacrilege!"

Frank was surprised. "Why, I thought that was putting it nicely.

So you see, Uncle Henry, that I am forced to a level in society which renders it necessary for me to say that, after what has occurred to-day, I cannot think of marrying Miss Good—"

"Henry," cried Eunice, excitedly, "do you mean to stand there in patience and listen to your insolent nephew repudiating the sister of your wife? Frank Archer, you sha'n't, you shall *not* trifle with that young girl's affections!"

"But—"

"No, sir, no; you sha'n't say a word. Henry Archer, don't you ever permit him to utter a word. Such a long and trying engagement—and her sweet young hopes so long deferred—her clinging, affectionate nature—and the way you have kept her waiting! You cruel thing—There! I hear the poor little wounded thing in the hall."

She ran to the door at astonishing speed. "Hope—Hope, my dear, darling sister, come to the arms of your own adoring Eunice."

A blushing young woman, radiant and lovely, was nearly being strangled in the warm embrace of her sister.

"Oh—then—Frank has told—you—know all—all about it," she gasped, in smothered sentences. "Oh, you—dear—darling thing!"

"Know about what?" said Eunice, suddenly, dropping her arms and looking from one to the other in the room. "Frank has told us what?"

"I was trying to tell," started Frank, "but I couldn't get—"

"You haven't told a thing," said his aunt, interrupting.

"Oh, Lord!" said Henry, and he held his hands to his aching head.

"Hope," continued Eunice, "tell me instantly the meaning of all this mystery."

"Why—Frank—came on ahead—on purpose to tell," replied the girl, and she twirled a ring upon her finger.

"Well—to tell us what?"

"I said that after what had occurred," said Frank, "it would hardly be possible—"

"Stop!" commanded Eunice.
 "Don't you think of repeating what
 you said, in the presence of my sister,
 Hope, what is that on your finger?"
 "Why—that—that's—it!" said the
 girl.

"Now we're in for more," gasped

Uncle Henry, and he sat himself
 down resignedly.

"That's what I've been trying to
 tell," insisted Frank. "The fact is
 that we—we got tired of waiting,
 and—and went and got married—this
 morning."



THE END-OF-THE-CENTURY GIRL

THEY prate of the maidens of grandmother's day,
 And vow that their womanly peers
 Have never lived since, but it's candor to say
 The glamor of long-agone years
 Has fashioned a halo about their fair heads,
 A nimbus enmeshing each curl;
 But the more trying light of the Present o'erspreads
 The end-of-the-century girl.

Of Puritan primness perhaps she has none,
 And shyness she ne'er will affect,
 But gentlemen true there is never a one
 But shows her each mark of respect;
 Deservedly, too, for her manner but means
 She's dared Freedom's flag to unfurl.
 A specimen she of democracy's queens—
 The end-of-the-century girl.

She's not like the maidens of long-agone days
 In dress, for a heart that is light
 Should never be shrouded in ashen-like grays,
 She thinks; and I hold she is right!
 Though frowned on by poverty, smiled on by wealth,
 In the marts' or society's whirl,
 She's a queen, every inch of her! Here's to the health
 Of the end-of-the-century girl!

ROY FARRELL GREENE.



PREPARED FOR THE WORST

THE STOUT ONE—Aren't you tired of holding me, dearest?
 THE OTHER ONE—Not a bit, darling. For three weeks before I pro-
 posed to you I practiced on a four-hundred-pound dummy.